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t h e s i x t h s e n s e

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INT. BASEMENT - EVENING

A NAKED LIGHTBULB SPARKS TO LIFE. It dangles from the ceiling of a basement.

LIGHT QUICK FOOTSTEPS AS ANNA CROWE moves down the stairs.

Anna is the rare combination of beauty and innocence. She stands in the chilly basement in an elegant summer dress that outlines her slender body. Her gentle eyes move across the empty room and come to rest on a rack of wine bottles covering one entire wall.

She walks to the bottles. Her fingertips slide over the labels. She stops when she finds just the right one. A tiny smile as she slides it out.

Anna turns to leave. Stops. She stares at the shadowy basement. It's an unsettling place. She stands very still and watches her breath form A TINY CLOUD IN THE COLD AIR. She's visibly uncomfortable.

Anna Crowe moves for the staircase in a hurry. Each step faster than the next. She climbs out of the basement in another burst of LIGHT QUICK FOOTSTEPS.

WE HEAR HER HIT THE LIGHT SWITCH.

THE LIGHTBULB DIES. DRIPPING BLACK DEVOURS THE ROOM.

CUT TO:

INT. DINING ROOM - EVENING

Two place settings. Two large plates of Chicken Francaise half eaten. An empty bottle of white wine sits in the center of the table.

Anna arrives with the back up bottle.

MALCOLM CROWE sits in a stylish suit, tie undone. Malcolm is in his thirties with thick wavy hair and striking, intelligent eyes that squint from years of intense study. His charming, easy going smile spreads across his face. He points.

MALCOLM
That's one fine frame. How much does a fine frame like that cost you think?

Malcolm points to the HUGE FRAMED CERTIFICATE propped up on a dinning room chair. It's printed on aged parchment type paper. The frame is a polished mahogany.

Anna hands the back up bottle over to Malcolm.

ANNA
(smiling)
You're drunk. I know, cause you start sounding like Dr. Seuss when you're drunk.

Malcolm uncorks the wine and starts pouring in the empty glasses.

MALCOLM
I'm serious. Serious I am.

Anna giggles. She's clearly buzzed herself. Anna takes a few calming sips of her wine. Her attention slowly moves to the framed certificate.

ANNA
Mahogany. I'd say that cost at least a couple hundred. Maybe three.

MALCOLM
Three? We should hock it. Buy a C.D. rack for the bedroom.

ANNA
Do you know how important this is? This is big time.
(beat)
I'm going to read it for you doctor.

MALCOLM
Do I really sound like Dr. Seuss?

Anna ignores Malcolm and clears her throat. She leans forward from her seat and reads the certificate out loud.

ANNA
In recognition for his outstanding achievement in the field of child psychology, his dedication to his work, and his continuing efforts to improve the quality of life for countless children and their families, the City of Philadelphia proudly bestows upon its son Dr. Malcolm Crowe, the Mayor's Citation for Professional Excellence.

Beat. The power of the words sober the two of them.

ANNA
Wow. They called you their son.

Beat.

MALCOLM
You think it's true?

Anna turns and stares at Malcolm.

ANNA
What'd you say?

MALCOLM
Do you believe that's true, what they said about me?

Anna's expression is suddenly dead serious.

ANNA
How can you ask me that? I don't care how drunk you are. How could you even wonder for a nanosecond about that?

MALCOLM
I wonder because... if you believe, then...
(beat)
I can believe.

Anna gazes at her husband quietly.

ANNA
You have a gift. Not a gift that allows you to hit a ball over a fence. Not a gift that produces beautiful images on a canvass... Your gift teaches children how to smile again, how to laugh and cherish life. Do you have any clue what kind of miracle you are?
(beat)
Yes, I believe everything they wrote about you... And then some.

The effect on Malcolm is profound. His eyes fill with emotion.

MALCOLM
(whispers)
Thank you.

Anna leans towards him. They hold each other tight. After a beat, Anna leans back and wipes her eyes.

ANNA
There wasn't supposed to be any crying at this celebration. Just a lot of drinking and sex.

Malcolm's charming easy going smile returns.

MALCOLM
I would like some white wine in a glass.

Anna hands him his glass. He stares at it.

MALCOLM
I would not like it in a mug. I
would not like it in a jug.

Malcolm looks at Anna surprised at what he said. They crack up laughing. THEIR SWEET LAUGHTER FILLS THE HOUSE.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

TWO GIGGLING SHADOWS APPEAR IN THE BEDROOM DOORWAY. They try to turn on the light. It doesn't come on.

MALCOLM
Bulb's out.

Anna giggles some more as Malcolm's shadow stumbles across the bedroom. MALCOLM TURNS ON THE BATHROOM LIGHT.

ANNA SCREAMS.

Malcolm spins around. His heart stops.

Malcolm and Anna stare at the STRANGER seated on the edge of their bed.

THE BEDROOM WINDOW IS SHATTERED. THE WIND MOVES THROUGH THE ROOM. A lamp lays broken on the ground by the window.

NO ONE MAKES A SOUND.

The STRANGER seated on their bed is about nineteen. Drugged out. Pitch black eyes bulging. His hands are folded on his lap. He shakes ever so slightly as he sits.

Malcolm speaks in a very calm voice. Never takes his eyes off the stranger.

MALCOLM
Anna, don't move. Don't say
a word.

Anna barely nods her understanding.

MALCOLM
(to the stranger)
This is forty-seven Locust Street. You have broken a window and entered a private residence. Do you understand what I'm saying?

The stranger slowly looks up for the first time. His eyes lock on Malcolm.

STRANGER
You don't know so many things.

Beat.

MALCOLM
There are no needles or prescription drugs of any kind in this house.

The stranger's face changes as he looks at Malcolm. He half grins.

STRANGER
Are you drunk?

The stranger's stare slides to Anna.

STRANGER
Did you get him drunk?

MALCOLM
She doesn't need to be involved in this.

The stranger doesn't take his eyes off of Anna. He gazes at her.

STRANGER
Do you know why you're scared when you're alone?

Anna's expression instantly changes.

ANNA
How did-

STRANGER
I know.

BEAT. THE ROOM GOES SILENT.

MALCOLM
All three of us are scared right now. Tell me what's happening here? I have no idea what you want.

The stranger turns and glares at Malcolm.

STRANGER
What you promised.

Malcolm stops all movement.

MALCOLM
(whispers)
My God, do I know you?

STRANGER
Dr. Malcolm Crowe, recipient of awards from the Mayor on the news. Dr. . Malcolm Crowe, he's helped so many children. Let's all celebrate Dr. Malcolm Crowe.

Malcolm can't speak. Beat. The stranger's face starts to tremble.

STRANGER
You said.everything would be all right. You said there was nothing to be afraid of. You said I was upset about my parent's divorce.
(beat)
You were wrong.

Malcolm looks like someone hit him with a sledgehammer.

STRANGER
I'm nineteen. I have drugs in my system twenty-four hours a day... I still have no friends. I still have no peace. I'm still afraid.

The stranger's eyes water up.

STRANGER
...I'm still afraid.

The stranger's hands move on his lap, revealing A CRUDE HAND GUN.

ANNA
(whispers)
...Oh God no.

MALCOLM
This is moving at light speed. We need to slow this way down. I need to think. Give me a second to think.

Malcolm's shaking hands touch his mouth as he stares at the stranger. Beat.

MALCOLM
What if I told you your name?
(beat)
That'd be something right? Show you, you mattered.

The stranger's unsettling gaze remains steady.

MALCOLM
(ranting)
Okay, you're nineteen. You must have looked very different... I don't recognize you ... Probably worked with

you as a pre-adolescent...
Nine, ten.

Beat. Malcolm's intelligent eyes race for answers.

MALCOLM
You have a hard Philly accent. You're local. I must have seen you at the downtown clinic back then... Single parent family...
(glances at gun)
... possible mood disorder... No friends... Socially isolated... Afraid... Acute anxiety...
(beat)
Come on think!... Male, nine or ten... Single parent... Mood disorder... Acute anxiety...
(Beat)
Bed Freidken?... No.

STRANGER
Some people call me freak.

MALCOLM
...Ronald... Ronald Sumner... Not right.

Tears fall down the stranger's face.

STRANGER
I am a freak.

MALCOLM
No you're not.

STRANGER
I'm so tired.

MALCOLM
Hold on... Hold on... Clinic.. Nine-ten... socially

isolated... single parent...
Acute-

Malcolm looks up.

MALCOLM
Vincent Gray?

THE ROOM GOES SILENT AGAIN.

MALCOLM
-Vincent?

Beat.

STRANGER
I was ten.

Malcolm takes a deep breath like he just emerged from deep waters.

MALCOLM
I do remember you Vincent.
You were a good kid. Very,
very smart...
Compassionate... Quiet...

Vincent's eyes burn at Malcolm.

VINCENT
You forgot cursed.

VINCENT is fully crying now . He raises the gun. Aims it across at Malcolm.

MALCOLM
(whispers)
Vincent... I'm sorry I didn't
help you... I can try to help
you now-

Vincent closes his eyes and FIRES. A VIOLENT EAR SHATTERING ECHO.
Malcolm clutches his stomach and folds like a rag doll.

Vincent instantly moves the gun to his own head. ANOTHER HORRIFIC BLAST SPIKES THE AIR. Vincent tips back on the bed as if in slow motion.

ANNA'S CHILLING SCREAMS FILL THEIR HOME.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BENCH - AFTERNOON

The legend, "Two Years Later" appears.

A man flips open a worn file folder on his lap. A passport sized photo of a ten year old Vincent Gray sits clipped to the top of the papers. Another picture sits loose in the folder. This one cut from a newspaper. It's a picture of Vincent Gray at Nineteen.

The man's hand touches the pictures almost reverently.

He glances through the decade old file. Words and phrases are highlighted throughout the file.

"...Vincent Gray - Age 10"
"...Acute anxiety"
"...Socially isolated"
"...Possible mood disorder"
"...Parental status - Divorced"
"...Communication difficulty between mother-child dyad"

The man's hands close the weathered file. Slides a NEW FILE FOLDER on top. Opens it.

A passport sized picture of an eight year old child is clipped to the front. This new boy has dark hair and huge black eyes.

As the man's fingers move through the pages of the file we again see words and phrases highlighted throughout this new case history.

"...Cole Sear - Age 8"
"...Acute anxiety"
"...Socially isolated"
"...Possible mood disorder"
"...Parental status - Divorced"
"...Communication difficulty between mother-child dyad"

The hands close the file. The hands are slightly shaking now.

WE PULL BACK to reveal the shaking hands belong to Dr. Malcolm Crowe.

Malcolm sits on a sidewalk bench facing a row of brownstone homes across the street. He gazes blankly at the brownstones. Beat.

A door opens. Malcolm is brought out of his trance.

COLE SEAR steps out his front door. Cole is a munchkin of a boy with large black eyes that seem to take in everything around him. Cole carefully locks the door behind him.

He moves to the bottom of the stairs and looks around nervously. Anxiously.

The eight year old child reaches into his pocket and slips on a pair of VERY LARGE GLASSES. They look comical on him.

Malcolm rises to his feet. He smoothes out his shirt. Looks down and buttons his jacket.

When he looks up, Cole is gone.

Malcolm barely catches a glimpse of the boy. Cole runs at full speed down the street and turns the corner. TINY SNEAKERS SCREECHING ON THE SIDEWALK.

For a second, Malcolm doesn't react. The second passes. He stuffs the files in his bag and starts running too.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY

Malcolm hauls down the sidewalk. He comes to a hard stop at a street intersection. Searches. Spots Cole running into a parking lot.

COLE sprints across the empty lot and reaches the doors of a building. He has to use all his strength to push open the highly ornate doors. He slips inside.

Malcolm jogs into the parking area. His pace slows to a walk and then to stillness as he gazes up at the building. Its old stone and huge towers make it stand out from the modern buildings all around it. Malcolm stares up at the historic Philadelphia church quietly.

A SHOOTING PAIN PIERCES HIS SIDE. Malcolm's hand goes to it quickly. He waits for it to pass before starting for the ornate doors.

CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Only a few people sit and pray in the sea of oak pews.

Malcolm scans the majestic room and finds what he's looking for in the last row of the church.

He moves down the center aisle towards the back.

Malcolm finds Cole playing in his pew with a set of green and beige plastic soldiers. Cole makes the soldiers talk to each other.

COLE
(soft)
Pro...Fun... Add...

The words are unintelligible.

Cole senses someone. He looks up and sees Malcolm staring at him. The boy immediately goes white.

MALCOLM
It's okay Cole. Don't be frightened.

Cole stays rigid. Hands clutching a handful of plastic riflemen.

MALCOLM
My name is Dr. Malcolm Crowe. I was supposed to meet you today. Sorry I missed our appointment.

Malcolm waits for a response. None comes.

MALCOLM
Do you mind if I sit down? I have this injury from a couple years ago and it flares up every once and a while just so I won't forget it.

Beat. Cole slowly slides down the pew, giving Malcolm most of the seat. Malcolm sits.

Cole fidgets with his soldiers. Beat. Malcolm looks over and stares at Cole's glasses. He leans forward to inspect them more carefully.

MALCOLM

Your eye frames. They don't seem to have any lenses in them.

COLE
(soft)
They're my dad's. The lenses hurt my eyes.

MALCOLM
I knew there was a sound explanation.

Malcolm returns to staring at his lap. Beat.

MALCOLM
What was that you were saying before with your soldiers? Day pro fun

COLE
...De profundis clamo ad te domine.

Malcolm stares surprised.

COLE
It's called Latin. It's a language.

Malcolm nods at the information.

MALCOLM
All your soldiers speak Latin?

COLE
No just one.

Malcolm smiles at Cole. His eyes drift down to Cole's arms. Malcolm's smile slowly disappears.

Cole's arms are covered in TINY CUTS AND BRUISES. Some almost healed. Some fresh. Malcolm looks around to gather himself. Beat.

MALCOLM
I like churches too.
(beat)
In olden times, in Europe people used to hide in churches. Claim sanctuary.

Cole looks up.

COLE
What were they hiding from?

MALCOLM
Oh lots of things I suppose. Bad people for one. People who wanted to imprison them. Hurt them.

COLE
Nothing bad can happen in a church right?

Malcolm studies Cole's anxious face.

MALCOLM
Right.

Malcolm and Cole just stare at each other.

COLE
I forgot your name.

MALCOLM
Dr. Crowe.

COLE
You're a doctor? What kind?

MALCOLM
I work with young people who might be sad or upset or just want to talk. I try to help them figure things out.

Beat.

COLE
Are you good?

Malcolm smiles.

MALCOLM
I got an award once. From the Mayor.

COLE
Congratulations.

MALCOLM
Thank you. It was a long time ago. I've kind of been retired for a while.
(beat)
You're my very first client back.

COLE
You use needles?

MALCOLM
No.

COLE
Not even little ones that aren't supposed to hurt?

MALCOLM
No.

COLE
That's good.

Cole pockets his soldiers and rises from his pew.

COLE
I'm going to see you again right?

MALCOLM
If it's okay with you?

Cole thinks it over carefully.

COLE
It's okay with me.

Cole and Malcolm just stare at each other.

MALCOLM
And Cole, next time I won't be late for you.

COLE
Next time I won't be scared of you.

Cole turns and starts to the rear of the church. Malcolm loses himself in his thoughts.

When Malcolm looks back, he sees Cole stop by the exit doors and take a tiny STATUE OF JESUS off the back table. Cole pockets the statue and quietly leaves the church.

Malcolm just sits and stares.

CUT TO:

INT. MALCOLM'S HOME - EVENING

The house is dimly lit. Malcolm has to turn on the HALLWAY LIGHT.

MALCOLM
It's me.

He stops before a pile of mail collecting on a thin table. He stares at it blankly. Almost every envelope has "Over Due" or "Final Notice" stamped on it.

CUT TO:

INT. DINING TABLE - EVENING

Malcolm stares down at the remains of a meal on the only place setting on the table.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - EVENING

Malcolm quietly walks into his bedroom. Only A READING LIGHT IS ON. THE SOFT LIGHT FALLS ON ANNA AS SHE SLEEPS.

Malcolm moves to her side. The sight of her stops him.

He stares at his wife...

She huddles under a blanket, a wad of tissues in her hand. He takes it in silently.

His eyes move to her face... One wisp of hair falls over her soft lips. OUTLINED IN THE SOFT READING LIGHT, Anna Crowe truly looks like an angel.

Malcolm forms a tiny smile.

CUT TO:

INT. HALL - NIGHT

Malcolm turns and moves for a narrow door in the hall. He tries to open it. IT STICKS. He yanks at it hard and opens it. Malcolm disappears down a thin stairway.

CUT TO:

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

The empty basement is no longer empty. It's piled with file cabinets and boxes of psychology and medical books. A desk sits in the corner next to the wine racks.

The room still feels unsettling.

Malcolm hunches over one of the boxes. Rifles through a stack of dusty books. Pulls out a thick text.

The spine of the text reads, " The Meridian Latin Dictionary"

Malcolm sits back at his desk and opens Cole's file. Handwritten on the first page are the words,

"De profundis clams ad te, domine"

Malcolm starts working through the Latin text. As he comes to each word, he jots it down underneath the Latin.

Malcolm translates the last word.

He stares quietly at the paper. The new words read...

"Out of the depths, I cry to you Lord."

Beat.

MALCOLM
(whispers)
...The mass for the dead.

The words seem to hang in the air forever.

CUT TO:

EXT. PHILADELPHIA - DAWN

Old Philadelphia awakens... For a moment, it's like we're back in time.

A golden sun dances on the waters of Penns Landing. Historical old ships sit docked in its harbor... The dark bronze surface of the Liberty Bell reflects the dawn...A majestic Independence Hall stands watch as its city begins to stir...A thirty foot statue of Ben Franklin makes a proud silhouette against the morning sky...

AND THEN 1997 COMES CRASHING IN.

FLUORESCENT HOUSE LIGHTS COME ON IN WINDOWS... Jeeps and hatchbacks start roaming the cobblestone streets...Neon restaurants signs flicker to life...Traffic helicopters make their rounds...CAR ALARMS PIERCE THE AIR.

CUT TO:

INT. BROWNSTONE KITCHEN - MORNING

LYNN SEAR leans against the kitchen counter, dressed for work. The coffee maker does its job slowly in front of her.

Lynn is a woman in her late twenties. One hundred percent South Philly. Hair teased and moussed. Makeup generous. She chews on an early morning piece of Trident. Under all of it, Lynn Sear is an attractive and sweet looking young woman.

Lynn shivers a little. She moves to the thermostat and cranks up the heat. She returns to her post at the coffee maker.

Her gum chewing starts to slow. Her eyes start to shut sleepily.

THEN THE SOUND OF LOUD SQUEAKY THUDS COMES DOWN FROM THE CEILING.

Lynn is instantly awake. THE THUDS ARE STRONG. She stares straight up.

LYNN
No jumping on the bed!

Beat. THE CRASHING OF THE MATTRESS SPRINGS BECOME LOUDER AND FASTER.

LYNN
Your Cocoa Puffs are getting soggy!

THE BANGING BECOMES VERY STRONG - SHAKING THE KITCHEN SLIGHTLY. Lynn can't believe it.

LYNN
I know you heard me! Get down here!

Tiny particles from the ceiling begin to chip and fall to the kitchen floor. THE THUDS ARE ALMOST VIOLENT NOW.

Lynn starts to think something's wrong for the first time.

LYNN
Okay, I'm counting to three! One!... Two!...

THE SOUND OF THE BEDSPRINGS INSTANTLY STOPS. ONLY THE GURGLING OF THE COFFEE MACHINE CAN BE HEARD.

Lynn lets out a tense breath. Touches her moussed hair nervously. She stands thinking to herself for a moment. Beat.

Lynn turns to face the kitchen table and SCREAMS AT THE TOP OF HER LUNGS.

Cole is seated at the kitchen table in his private school uniform. Cole jerks back from his milk as his mom screams.

Lynn catches her breath.

LYNN
I thought you were still upstairs.

Cole doesn't make eye contact with his mom

LYNN
How'd you come down so fast?

Cole shrugs his shoulders. Lynn studies her son.

LYNN
What's wrong? Did you get hurt?

Cole doesn't answer.

LYNN
Cole?

THE DOOR BELL RINGS. Cole drinks the rest of his milk and cereal and takes his bag

COLE
That's Tommy, Momma.

Cole kisses his flustered mother on the cheek then walks out the front door.

Lynn stands motionless in the kitchen. She looks up and wraps her arms around her shivering shoulders.

CUT TO:

EXT. BROWNSTONE STREET - MORNING

TOMMY TAMMISIMO is a tough looking eight year old Italian kid who waits at the bottom of Cole's brownstone stairs in his school uniform. Tommy looks like he'd rather be anywhere in the world than at the bottom of those stairs.

Cole emerges from the brownstone and moves down the steps. Lynn's face appears in the kitchen window.

The two boys begin their walk down the street to school. Tommy puts his arm around Cole. Lynn waves. Cole waves back.

When the two boys turn the corner and are out of Lynn's sight. Tommy rips his arm away.

TOMMY
You're on your own freak...

Tommy starts to run ahead, he turns and back pedals.

TOMMY
Watch out. Someone might
get you.

Tommy laughs and runs away.

Beat. Cole looks around nervously, then buries his hands in his pockets and begins a slow quiet walk down the sidewalk by himself.

CUT TO:

INT. DEN - AFTERNOON

We are in Cole's house. In the den. Boxes of old toys sit in the corner. A small plastic multi-colored table sits on a rug.

Malcolm has pulled up a folding chair and watches as Cole plays with his action figures. Cole is in thick sweater pulled up to his chin to keep him warm.

COLE
Momma went to a doctor like
you when my dad and her got
divorced.

MALCOLM
Did she tell you about the
doctor?

COLE
She said he was bald. He combed his hair from one side all the way over to the other side.

Cole presses his hair flat to give Malcolm a better idea.

MALCOLM
(smiles)
Did she tell you anything else?

COLE
His feet smelled.

MALCOLM
Did she say anything beyond his appearance? Did she say anything about her experience in therapy? What they talked about?

Beat.

COLE
Momma said she was supposed to tell him things. Things she couldn't tell anybody else.
(beat)
Secrets.

Malcolm and Cole look at each other.

COLE
(whispers)
You want me to tell you secrets?

MALCOLM
(whispers)

Do you have secrets?

Cole sits still for a second and then nods his head, "Yes."

MALCOLM
(whispers)
Do you want to talk about them?

Cole nods, "No."

MALCOLM
Then we won't.

Beat. Malcolm looks to Cole's arm. Cole is wearing A LARGE SILVER WATCH. It swims on his thin wrist. It could probably slide up to his shoulder.

MALCOLM
Your father's?

COLE
I found it in a drawer. It doesn't work.

Beat. Malcolm leans over. Pulls out Cole's file from his bag.

MALCOLM
I saw your records. You're an excellent student.
(beat)
There was something that seemed unusual though...

COLE
The drawing.

MALCOLM
Right.
(beat)
The class was supposed to draw whatever they wanted. You drew a man being stabbed with a screwdriver.

An uncomfortable SILENCE OVERTAKES THE DEN. Beat.

MALCOLM
Have you ever seen a man being stabbed Cole?

Cole is very still. He doesn't move at all. Malcolm waits awhile before speaking again.

MALCOLM
You've been asked a lot of questions about that picture haven't you?

Cole nods, "yes."

COLE
Everybody got upset. They had a meeting. Momma started crying.
(beat)
I don't draw like that anymore.

MALCOLM
How do you draw now?

COLE
I draw people with smiles, dogs, and rainbows.
(beat)
They don't have meetings about rainbows.

MALCOLM
(chuckles)
I guess they don't.

Cole's face turns to ice.

COLE
You're not supposed to laugh!

Malcolm instantly stops.

MALCOLM

I think you misunderstood-

COLE
You're like everybody!

MALCOLM
Cole I wasn't laughing-

COLE
I'm not telling you any of my secrets!

MALCOLM
I wasn't laughing-

COLE
I don't want to talk anymore.

MALCOLM
Cole-

Cole covers his ears and closes his eyes.

COLE
I don't want to talk anymore I
don't want to talk anymore I
don't want to talk anymore...

Cole slowly stops chanting. He keeps his eyes closed and covers his ears. His body rocks slightly.

Malcolm stares helplessly across the table at Cole Sear curled up in his chair.

THE DEN IS SUFFOCATED WITH SILENCE.

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - EVENING

Malcolm hurriedly enters a spacious, dimly lit Italian restaurant. He stops in the dining room and searches the many candle lit tables. He finds Anna.

Anna sits alone at a corner table. The remains of her half-eaten dinner lay on the only place setting on the table. A small PIECE OF CAKE WITH A CANDLE in it sits untouched.

Anna stirs sugar in her coffee as Malcolm sits in the seat across from her. She gently stops stirring. but doesn't look up. Beat.

MALCOLM
I'm so sorry.
(beat)
I can't seem to keep track of time.

Anna quietly takes a sip from her coffee.

MALCOLM
It didn't go well today. Spent some time after trying to get my head together.

Anna looks around for the waiter.

MALCOLM
They're so similar Anna. They have the same mannerisms. The same expressions. The same thing hanging over them.
(beat)
It might be some kind of abuse.

That makes Anna turn back. She glances across the table. then looks down.

MALCOLM
There are cuts on Cole's arms. Fingernail marks I think. Look like defensive cuts.

Malcolm demonstrates by holding up his arm to shield his face.

MALCOLM
Hard to say this early. Could just be a child climbing a lot of trees.

The waiter drops off the check on the table. Anna grabs it before Malcolm and quickly signs it.

MALCOLM
I know I've been kind of out of it for a long while and you resent it. You do. I know you're mad. I know it's put some distance between us.

Beat.

MALCOLM
But I'm getting a second chance here. To help again. To figure out what I missed. To right a wrong. I can't let it slip away.

Anna waits till he's done and rises from the table. She pushed her chair in hard and walks away without a word. Malcolm sits alone and stares at the piece of cake with a candle on it.

MALCOLM
(soft)
...Happy Anniversary.

CUT TO:

INT. DEN - AFTERNOON

We are in Cole's den. Cole is at the multi-colored table setting up his men to have a war. Malcolm sits in the folding chair and observes.

On the table are two rows of soldiers facing each other. To one side of the table are a couple soldiers covered by a tissue. Malcolm points to them.

MALCOLM
Who are they?

Cole removes the tissue.

COLE
That's private Jenkins and Private Kinney. They got killed. Private Jenkins has a baby girl that was born seven

pounds six ounces. He's never seen her. He wanted to get back to Blue Bell Pennsylvania and hold her...

Cole points to the other soldier.

COLE
Private Kinney's wife is really sick - she has something called a brain anism.

MALCOLM
(soft)
Aneurysm.

COLE
Private Kinney needed to get back safe to take care of her.

Beat. Cole's face becomes emotional. Tears fill his eyes.

COLE
It's sad they died, isn't it?

Malcolm falls into silence and stares at his client. Beat. Cole wipes his eyes quickly.

COLE
Don't look at me.
(beat)
I don't like people looking at me like that.

Malcolm tries to read Cole's expression.

COLE
Stop looking at me.

MALCOLM

Where should I look then Cole?

COLE
Look over there.

Cole points to the corner of the den. Malcolm slowly turns his chair. He sits in profile to Cole. Beat.

MALCOLM
Your soldiers... You understand a lot about people's feelings. It's very unusual for someone your age.

Malcolm continues to stare at the corner.

MALCOLM
Can I look back now?

COLE
Don't look.

Malcolm sits patiently. Beat. They don't say anything for awhile.

MALCOLM
You wouldn't want to take a walk would you?

Cole looks up from his soldiers. Malcolm stares at the corner of the room.

MALCOLM
Tap the table twice if the answer's "yes."

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - AFTERNOON

The two of them walk down a row of brownstones across from a park.

COLE
I walk this way to school
with Tommy Tammisimo.

MALCOLM
He your best buddy?

COLE
He hates me.

Malcolm thinks for a bit.

MALCOLM
The moms set that up?

Cole nods "Yes."

MALCOLM
You hate him?

Cole shakes his head. "No."

MALCOLM
Why doesn't he like you?

COLE
Cause I'm a freak.

Malcolm stops walking. The words hit him hard. He stares at Cole.

MALCOLM
Don't you believe what they
say. Don't grow up believing
that.

Beat. Malcolm's passionate face affects Cole. Cole looks at Malcolm with different eyes. The child nods slowly.

They start walking again in silence. They turn a corner and move down another street. Cole spots an old man with a cane standing at the gate of a brownstone.

COLE
Is it okay if I do something? I
have to do something.

Malcolm nods "yes" as they continue walking. Cole slows as they approach the old man. As we get closer, we make out the man can barely see.

COLE
Hi Mr. Marschal.

MR. MARSCHAL leans over his gate and stares at Cole for a few seconds.

MR. MARSCHAL
Hello Cole.

Mr. Marschal has a thick German accent. The old man squints down the block with a concerned expression.

COLE
What's wrong?

MR. MARSCHAL
Mrs. Marschal. She went food shopping. She's running late.

Beat.

COLE
Ich Habe Durst.

Malcolm's eyes dart to Cole.

MR. MARSCHAL
How wonderful! Where did you learn to speak German?

COLE
I just know a couple lines.

MR. MARSCHAL
Yes you may have a drink. What would you like?

COLE
Lemonade.

Mr. Marschal smiles at Cole before walking back inside his house. Cole turns back to Malcolm.

COLE
(sad)
Mr. Marschal gets real lonely.

MALCOLM
What about Mrs. Marschal?

COLE
(whispers)
She died a long time ago.

CUT TO:

INT. MR. MARSCHAL'S LIVING ROOM - MORNING

This brownstone has been home to the Marschal's for many, many years. It's filled with a lifetime of memories. Memories shared by two people.

Two rocking chairs sit side by side near the windows that overlook the street... A corner table displays a fancy wooden chess set. The game half-finished, frozen in a layer of dust... An easel stands before a piano. The incomplete water color painting of a smiling elderly woman sitting on the piano bench sits sadly on the faded yellow paper.

Malcolm takes in the living room silently. He stands near the open door.

Cole walks through the room. Tiny eyes searching carefully. He leans behind the sofa looking for something. Malcolm watches Cole with a crinkled brow.

Cole peaks behind the old piano crammed against the wall.

MR. MARSCHAL
Maybe Jill will play for us when she gets back.

Cole turns to find Mr. Marschal standing with a glass of lemonade. Cole takes it from his shaking hands.

COLE
Thank you.

Mr. Marschal shuffles over to the sofa. Takes a seat.

Cole begins surveying the room again. Beat. His eyes finally come to rest on a plant seated in the corner. He stares at it... THE LEAVES OF THE PLANT SHAKE SLIGHTLY FROM A BREEZE.

Cole puts down his glass on a table and walks over to the plant. Cole kneels down and starts to push the potted plant aside. THE POT SCREECHES ON THE WOODEN FLOOR.

Malcolm calls to Cole under his breath.

MALCOLM
Cole-

MR. MARSCHAL
What's going on there?

Mr. Marschal strains to see across the room.

Cole doesn't answer either of them. Instead, he continues to push the plant aside revealing AN AIR VENT. Cole gently reaches over and takes off the metal face. It slips right off.

Cole's hands disappear into the darkness of the vent. They reemerge holding a STACK OF NOTEBOOKS.

Malcolm becomes very still.

Cole rises to his feet and carries the notebooks over to Mr. Marschal. Cole carefully places them on his lap.

MR. MARSCHAL
Is this for me?

Mr. Marschal fingers the notebooks then reaches for his thick glasses hanging from his neck. He places them on the tip of his nose and inspects the notebooks six inches from his face.

MR. MARSCHAL
What's this? Jill's keeping a diary.

Malcolm takes an involuntary step forward.

Mr. Marschal starts flipping through the notebooks.

MR. MARSCHAL
She's full of surprises...

He gets to the last book. His hands become still as he stares at the final page of writing.

MR. MARSCHAL
(whispers)
She hasn't written anything
for some time.

Beat. Mr. Marschal slowly looks up from the notebooks. Looks up to Cole. Cole just stands quietly.

Mr. Marschal's eyes slowly fill with tears of realization. They gently spill down his weathered face.

MR. MARSCHAL
Oh no...

Cole takes a deep breath. Trying hard not to cry himself. The sight of Mr. Marschal weeping shakes Cole.

Cole softly lays his hand on Mr. Marschal's silver hair. Mr. Marschal reaches up and clutches his small hand.

They stay like that for a while. Beat. Mr. Marschal lets go and brings the notebooks tighter to his body.

Cole quietly walks to Malcolm who stands motionless. He stares down at Cole in a daze.

Cole turns his head, crying.

COLE
(softly)
Stop looking at me.

CUT TO:

INT. BASEMENT OFFICE - NIGHT

Malcolm sits still in his office chair. His eyes are fixed at a point in space. He brings a slim black tape recorder to his mouth.

CLICK.

MALCOLM
April or March of Eighty-seven. Two weeks into sessions with Vincent Gray. I was treating a couple. Donald and Robin Wagner, who had lost their child to Leukemia. They were waiting with Vincent in the reception room of the downtown clinic. They were alone together maybe fifteen minutes. When I entered the room, all three were crying. The Wagner's progress from that afternoon was dramatic and sudden... As if some door had been opened for them.
(beat)
I'm still uncertain what happened in those fifteen minutes. But I now believe Vincent tried to tell me something, show me something and I didn't listen.
(beat)
Cole Sear let me witness something today.
(beat)
This time I'm going to listen.

A long silence. CLICK. The tape recorder turns off.

DISSOLVE:TO:

INT. BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

Lynn holds a laundry basket on her hip as she fiddles with the thermostat in the kitchen. The house is cold. Lynn wears a winter jacket in the house.

Lynn turns and moves into the shadowy hallway. No lights. The house seems somewhat ominous. Beat.

Lynn's eyes dart to an open guest room like she just saw something. She stares in the doorway until a SOUND TURNS HER IN THE DIRECTION OF THE FAMILY ROOM.

Her eyes scan the darkness.

LYNN
Cole? Are you playing?

Lynn doesn't move. She listens to the SILENCE. Beat. She starts back down the hall picking up balled up boy's sweat socks and dirty T-shirts laying on the carpet. When she reaches the end of the hall, she HITS A LIGHT SWITCH. The hall LIGHTS UP REVEALING A WALL OF PHOTOS. Lynn forms a tiny smile

Snapshots of Cole and Lynn's life hang before her eyes.

Cole's birthday parties... Lynn and Cole at an amusement park... Cole under the Christmas tree... Cole on Lynn's shoulders in a pool... Cole with a group of neighbors at a barbecue...

Lynn takes a step forward. Lynn's face betrays the fact that she notices something she never noticed before. She touches a photo of three year old Cole.

WE MOVE INTO THE PHOTO - COLE'S FACE SMILES AT US. LYNN'S FINGER GENTLY BRUSHES A THIN STREAK OF LIGHT THAT CURVES IN THE BACKGROUND BEHIND COLE. THE STREAK OF LIGHT IS BLURRED, LIKE SOMETHING CAUGHT IN MOTION.

Lynn looks to the adjacent photo - the barbecue photo - Everyone stands with hot dogs and sodas. Lynn searches the picture. Her eyes suddenly stop at the TINIEST BLUR OF WHITE LIGHT STREAKING AROUND COLE.

WE MOVE FROM FRAMED PHOTO TO FRAMED PHOTO - EACH THE SAME - SOMEWHERE HIDDEN IN THE FRAME, SOMEWHERE NOT EASILY SEEN, LYNN FINDS A BLUR.

Lynn takes it all in curiously.

CUT TO:

INT. COLE'S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Lynn moves into Cole's room with the laundry basket balanced on her hip. The Walkman headphones on her head blares A MUFFLED TECHNO DANCE BEAT. Lynn starts picking clothes up around Cole's room.

This bedroom is an eerie place. The shadows seem to make shapes and figures. All the furniture is wood - old fashioned. The lamps, the paintings on the wall - antiques as well.

A small red camping tent sits in the corner. A sign hangs over the entrance flap.

"DO NOT TOUCH"

Lynn grabs the spiderman P.J.s that drape over the tent.

A German Shepherd Puppy sleeps on the pillow. SEBASTIAN lifts his head sleepily and peers at Lynn before returning to his slumber.

Lynn slowly reaches for a picture frame that peeks out from under Cole's pillow. Slides it out... It's a FAMILY PHOTO. Lynn and Cole and a man. The man wears glasses and smiles warmly at the camera. The man looks in every way a larger version of Cole.

The picture has a visible effect on Lynn. She lets out a shaky breath before returning the photo to its hiding place.

Lynn pulls a pair of school uniform pants off the wooden roll cover desk next to the bed.

The desk is covered with loose leaf papers filled with writings. Lynn's eyes are drawn to the papers.

Her curious gaze turns serious. Her mouth opens a tiny bit involuntarily.

THE PAPERS are strewn with lines of handwriting. Countless lines. Thousands of words... Some horizontal, some vertical... The writing moves in arcs and flows in varies sizes - written at great speed - every word connected by a single pen stroke - everything written in one continuous motion.

Lynn slowly spins the papers, taking in some of the phrases...

...Broken glass pray for help check the baby why didn't you come no one hears water rising no more pain...

The words go on and on.

Lynn removes her hands from the paper. She pulls her headphones off slowly.

THE MUFFLED TECHNO DANCE BEAT FILLS THE DEAD SILENCE OF THE EERIE ROOM.

CUT TO:

INT. DEN - AFTERNOON

Malcolm stares as the rain pelts the windows of the den.

MALCOLM
Where does he live now?

COLE(o.s.)
In Pittsburgh with a lady who works in a toll booth.

Beat.

COLE(o.s.)
You ask a lot of questions about my dad. How come?

Malcolm turns and looks at his client. Cole sits at his table wearing A GOLF CAP, many sizes to big for him. Beat.

MALCOLM
Sometimes, we don't even know it, but we do things to draw attention. Do things so we can express how we feel about issues... Divorce or whatever.

Cole just sits in his father's golf cap quietly.

MALCOLM
One might, as an example... leave something on a desk for someone to find.

Cole looks up.

MALCOLM
Cole, have you ever heard of something called, free - writing? Or free-association writing?

Cole shakes his head, "No."

MALCOLM
It's when you put a pencil in your hand and put the pencil to a paper and you just start writing... You don't think about what you're writing... You don't read over what you're writing... You just keep your hand moving.

Cole has become very still. He's looks right at Malcolm.

MALCOLM
After awhile if you keep your hand moving long enough, words and thoughts start coming out you didn't even know you had in you... Sometimes they're things you heard from somewhere... Sometimes they're feelings deep inside...
(Beat)
Have you ever done any free-association writing Cole?

Beat. Cole nods, "Yes."

MALCOLM
What'd you write?

COLE
Words.

MALCOLM
What kind of words?

COLE
Upset words.

Beat.

MALCOLM
Did you ever write any upset words before your father left?

Beat.

COLE
I don't remember.

Malcolm watches him carefully. Reading every movement the child makes. Beat.

MALCOLM
Can you do something for me?

Malcolm smiles. He rises and grabs his coat.

MALCOLM
Think about what you want from our time together. What our goal should be?

COLE
Something I want?

MALCOLM
If we could change something in your life. anything at all., what would you like that to be?

Cole's brow furrows as he thinks about it carefully.

MALCOLM
You don't have to answer now.

Malcolm heads for the door.

COLE
Instead of something I want, can I have something I don't want?

Malcolm turns back to Cole.

MALCOLM
Something you don't want?

COLE
Yeah.
(beat)
I don't want to be scared anymore.

Cole's sad eyes stare up at Malcolm.

CUT TO:

INT. BASEMENT OFFICE - NIGHT

The surface of Malcolm's desk is covered with open texts. Malcolm pours over a thick reference book.

He circles a phrase...

"...related neurological disorders may result in seizures causing bruises and abrasions on arms and legs."

Malcolm sits up and slowly works through all the possibilities in his head.

ANNA'S MUFFLED VOICE CARRIES DOWN THE STAIRS.

His face turns up to the ceiling.

MALCOLM
(yells)
I can't hear you.

ANNA'S VOICE IS UNCLEAR. MALCOLM TRIES TO LISTEN.

MALCOLM
I'll come up. Hold on.

CUT TO:

INT. HALL - EVENING

Malcolm moves down the hall to the living room.

MALCOLM'S P.O.V. - Anna's back is to us in a chair.

MALCOLM
I couldn't-

Malcolm stops when he gets close to her chair. Her hand has come into view, holding a phone to her ear.

ANNA
(into phone)
Sean that's awesome. Really wonderful news. It's so rare. A music box like that? I bet we could put it in the window and it'd sell in a week.

Malcolm stares at the back of his wife.

MALCOLM
(to himself)
My mistake.

ANNA
(into phone)
You know what... I'm smiling. I can't remember the last time I smiled.

Malcolm turns quietly and heads to the basement door. IT STICKS A LITTLE BEFORE IT OPENS.

The last thing Malcolm hears as he disappears down into his office, is the SOUND OF HIS WIFE'S SOFT LAUGHTER.

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

STANLEY CUNNINGHAM is a teacher in his late forties. He writes a question on the board.

MR. CUNNINGHAM
Can anyone guess what city was the capital of the United States of America from 1790 to 1800?

Mr. Cunningham turns and stares at his class of eight and nine year old private school students. They stare back at him blankly.

Cole rests his chin on his desk and watches the class with big eyes.

MR. CUNNINGHAM
I'll give you a hint, it's the city you live in.

The class says the answer in unison.

CLASS
Philadelphia.

MR. CUNNINGHAM
Right... Philadelphia is one of the oldest cities in the country. A lot of generations have lived and died in this city... Almost every place you visit has a history and a story behind it.
(Beat)
Even this school and the grounds they sit on... Can anyone guess what this building was used for a hundred years ago, before you went here, before I went to this school even?

Stanley Cunningham looks over the class of blank faces. He's just about to answer his own question when he sees a hand go up. Mr. Cunningham looks surprised to see who it is.

MR. CUNNINGHAM
Yes Cole?

COLE
They used to hang people here.

Mr. Cunningham furrows his brow. Beat.

MR. CUNNINGHAM
Where'd you hear that? That's not correct.

COLE
They'd pull the people in crying and kissing their families bye... People watching would spit at them.

Beat.

MR. CUNNINGHAM
Cole, this was a legal courthouse. Laws were passed here. Some of the first laws of this country. This building was full of lawyers. Lawmakers.

COLE
They were the ones who hanged everybody.

Mr. Cunningham chuckles. Cole's face turns cement grey.

MR. CUNNINGHAM
I don't know which one of these guys told you that, but they were just trying to scare you I think.

Tommy Tammisimo leads the class in a wave of snickering.

Cole never takes his eyes off his smiling teacher.

COLE
You're not supposed to laugh at me.

Mr. Cunningham sees the traumatized expression on Cole's face and instantly stops smiling.

MR. CUNNINGHAM
I wasn't laughing at-

COLE
You're a stuttering Stanley!

Mr. Cunningham's face becomes still. So does the classroom.

MR. CUNNINGHAM
Excuse me?

COLE
You talked funny when you went to school here. You talked funny all the way to high school!

The class falls into stunned silence. Mr. Cunningham takes an involuntary step towards Cole's desk.

MR. CUNNINGHAM
What-

COLE
You shouldn't laugh at people. It makes them feel bad.

Mr. Cunningham moves closer to Cole.

MR. CUNNINGHAM
How did you-?

COLE
Stop looking at me.

Cole covers his eyes with his hands.

MR. CUNNINGHAM
Who have you been s-speaking to?

We see Cole's mouth under his covered eyes.

COLE
Stuttering Stanley! Stuttering Stanley!

MR. CUNNINGHAM
Who!

Mr. Cunningham is standing right over Cole's desk now.

COLE
Stuttering Stanley!

MR. CUNNINGHAM
S-ssstop that!

COLE
Stuttering Stanley! Stuttering Stanley!

MR. CUNNINGHAM
S-ssssstop it!

COLE
Stuttering-

MR. CUNNINGHAM
-Shhhhhhut upppp you fffffffffreak!

MR. CUNNINGHAM SLAMS HIS HAND ON COLE'S DESK. Cole's hands drop from his eyes. The teacher's face is burning red.

The children in the room are frozen. Completely startled.

Cole's eyes are filled with tears.

Mr. Cunningham's expression drains of anger as Cole Sear begins to cry.

CUT TO:

INT. FACULTY LOUNGE - AFTERNOON

Cole is seated in the faculty lounge by himself. He sits at a long center table near the windows. His head is laying on his folded arms on the table.

Malcolm peeks his head in the door - unsure if he's in the right place. He spots Cole and enters the room. He silently takes a seat across from Cole. The eight year old looks up. Cole's eyes are red from crying.

MALCOLM
Hey big guy.

Cole stares for a second.

COLE
I don't want to talk about anything.

Cole lowers his head. Malcolm just sits and thinks.

THE SOUNDS OF BOYS PLAYING SPORTS ON THE FIELD OUTSIDE FILTER IN THROUGH THE FACULTY ROOM WINDOWS.

Cole turns his head and stares at the windows. Malcolm takes in the sad vision of this boy. It affects him. Beat.

MALCOLM
Do you like magic?

Cole turns from the windows and looks to Malcolm. Beat. Cole nods, "Yes."

Malcolm pulls out a penny from his pocket. He places it in his right hand.

MALCOLM
Watch the penny closely.

Malcolm closes his hand around the penny.

MALCOLM
I do the magic shake...

Malcolm shakes his hand in circles. Cole watches his hand carefully.

MALCOLM
And suddenly the penny has magically traveled to my left hand...

Cole looks to Malcolm's closed left hand. Malcolm doesn't open it.

MALCOLM
But that's not the end of the trick. With another magic shake, the penny travels into my shirt pocket...

Cole's eyes lock on Malcolm's shirt. Malcolm taps the pocket but doesn't open it.

MALCOLM
But that's still not the end!... I do a final magic shake... and suddenly... The penny returns to the hand where it started from.

Malcolm opens his right hand. The penny sits quietly in the center of his palm.

Cole looks at the penny and then up to Malcolm's face. Beat. Cole cracks a smile.

COLE
That isn't magic.

MALCOLM
What?

COLE
You just kept the penny in that hand the whole time...

MALCOLM
Who me?

Malcolm smiles a mischievous smile. He places the penny on the table. Cole stares at it with a grin. Cole wipes the old tears from his face and looks to Malcolm.

COLE
I didn't know you were funny.

MALCOLM
I forgot myself.

Malcolm and Cole share a warm look.

THE SOUNDS OF KIDS LAUGHING AND PLAYING OUT ON THE FIELD COME POURING INTO THE ROOM AGAIN.

Cole's expression changes back to sadness as he looks to the windows. Malcolm leans across the table and whispers.

MALCOLM
Cole...

Cole looks at Malcolm.

MALCOLM
One day...
(beat)
You're going to sound just like them.

Beat. Cole's chin starts to tremble. His voice cracks.

COLE
(whispers)
Promise?

Beat.

MALCOLM
(whispers)
Promise.

Malcolm and Cole sit in silence and listen to THE SOUNDS OF CHILDREN PLAYING.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - EVENING

Malcolm sorts through the many bills on the mail table.

WOMAN
(o.s.)
Malcolm I want you to listen to me. Anna's my best friend. You better make her happy.

Malcolm turns AT THE SOUND OF THE WOMAN, and moves into the empty living room where the t.v. is on. A blanket lays crumpled on the sofa.

THE WOMAN'S VOICE IS COMING FROM A VIDEO PLAYING IN THE VCR. IT'S A WEDDING VIDEO. A WOMAN IN A BRIDESMAID DRESS STANDS HOLDING THE MICROPHONE. IN THE BACKGROUND, WE CAN SEE THE DANCE FLOOR.

THE BRIDESMAID IS VERY EMOTIONAL.

BRIDESMAID
(o.s.)
You're a lucky guy. She really loves you. Don't tell her I told you, but she said she loved you from the first time she met you on the street. She'd do anything for you.
(crying)
I love you guys.

THE WOMAN HANDS THE MICROPHONE TO SOMEONE OFF SCREEN. THE CAMERA PANS AWAY FROM HER AND ZOOMS IN ON THE DANCE FLOOR. MALCOLM AND ANNA ARE SLOW DANCING. THEY'RE WHISPERING AND LAUGHING WITH EACH OTHER. THE HAPPINESS FROM THEM IS TANGIBLE.

Malcolm can't help smiling as he stares at the flickering images. He turns and looks down the hall to their bedroom.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - EVENING

Malcolm moves into their room.

THE SOUND OF A SHOWER CAN BE HEARD FROM THE BATHROOM.

Malcolm moves to the bathroom door and opens it slowly.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM - EVENING

Malcolm steps into the bathroom quietly. He stares at the silhouette of Anna's body through the smoked glass of the shower. Anna stands still, her head tilted back.

Malcolm watches quietly. By his expression, it's clear he's taken by his wife's beauty.

Malcolm starts towards the shower when his eyes glance to the sink. Malcolm locks on a tiny bottle resting on the marble surface.

He reaches out and picks it up. The label on the plastic bottle reads,

"Zoloft Anti-depressant"
"To be taken twice daily"

Malcolm gently puts down the plastic bottle. He gazes at the still figure of his wife as the water covers her.

Malcolm leaves the bathroom. He makes sure not to make a noise with the door as he closes it shut.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

Cole and an overweight boy named BOBBY are seated at a dining table covered in colorful paper. A stack of birthday presents are sitting on the table next to a cake.

The house is filled with the SOUND OF CHILDREN PLAYING AND LAUGHING.

Cole and the overweight boy are the only ones in the dining room. Bobby watches with a dull expression as Cole moves his hand in circles in the air.

COLE
...Then you do the magic shake. And now the penny moves from my pocket all the way to the hand it started in.

Cole smiles and holds out his hand. His fingers open to reveal the penny.

Bobby stares.

BOBBY
That's stupid.

Cole loses his smile.

COLE
It's supposed to be funny.

BOBBY
It's stupid.

Cole and the overweight boy stare at each other.

BOBBY
Give me my penny back.

Cole gives the boy his penny. Beat.

COLE
Know what, sometimes I feel angry too. At God even, for making me different than everybody else.
(beat)
Dr. Crowe told me maybe we were picked to be different.

Bobby finally looks up.

BOBBY
What?

COLE
Dr. Crowe said, everyone can't be the same. Some people have to be different. So maybe God picked the strong ones to be different, cause he knows it'll be tough.
(beat)
He thinks we're strong.

Bobby fidgets with a birthday napkin.

BOBBY
I'm not strong.

Beat.

COLE
Maybe we just don't know we're strong. And maybe one day like Spiderman when he found out he had spider powers - one day we'll find out we really were strong.

Beat. Bobby thinks it over.

BOBBY
Maybe.

COLE
Yeah, maybe.

Bobby smiles for the first time. Cole smiles and gets up from the table.

As Cole leaves the dining room, he hears something. It's Bobby. He's quietly humming the Spiderman theme.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

Cole passes the kitchen doorway. Inside Cole sees his mother and DARREN'S MOM speaking. It's clear they're from different worlds. Lynn is wearing tight clothes with hair teased to dramatic heights. Darren's mom is in a designer suit.

LYNN
...He doesn't get invited places.

DARREN'S MOM
It's our pleasure.

LYNN
The last time was a Chuck E. Cheese party a year ago. He hid in one of those purple plastic tunnels and didn't come out.

DARREN'S MOM
Chuck E. who?

LYNN
Cheese. It's a kid's place.

Darren's mom smiles formally and turns to give the catering people instructions on how to lay out the food on her sterling silver trays.

LYNN
He's my whole life.

Darren's mom turns back to Lynn, the forced smile on her face.

LYNN
I work at an insurance place and at Penny's, so Cole can go to that good school.

DARREN'S MOM
J.C. Penny's?

Lynn nods "Yes."

DARREN'S MOM
(bullshit)
Good for you.

LYNN
I wish I could be like my momma though. She always knew what was wrong. Knew just what to say.

Darren's mom glances at her expensive watch.

LYNN
Cole's going through something bad. He won't talk to me.
(beat)
I'm his momma
(emotional)
And I don't know what's wrong and I don't know what to say.

Lynn drowns in her thoughts. Cole moves away from the kitchen with sad eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. HALL - AFTERNOON

Cole passes two expensively dressed mothers standing in the hallway.

MRS. WESTON
They spent over a hundred thousand on the renovations.

MRS. SAUNDERS
I believe it. I saw this house when they closed. It was like two centuries old...

Cole moves down the shiny mahogany wood hallway. The women's conversation FADES AWAY behind him.

Cole turns a corner and comes to a dead stop. He turns white as he stares at an open CRAWL SPACE CLOSET a few feet away. Cole's eyes are riveted in the darkness of the closet. Beat.

THE HALLWAY ERUPTS WITH NOISE AS THE CHILDREN RUN IN FROM THE BACKYARD.

Tommy Tammisimo is one of the children. He glances down the hall and sees Cole standing frozen staring at the crawl space closet.

Tommy grabs a skinny kid with a party hat on, as he runs by.

TOMMY
Darren, check it out.

DARREN looks down the hall to Cole.

DARREN
My dad made me invite him.

Tommy nudges Darren to move down the hall. Cole breaks from his trance as Tommy and Darren walk up.

COLE
Happy birthday Darren.

TOMMY
Something you want to see in there?

Tommy points to the crawl space.

COLE
(too quick)
-No.

Beat. Tommy looks to Darren and then back to Cole:

TOMMY
You want to play a game?

Beat.

COLE
...Okay.

TOMMY
How about hide and seek?

Tommy stares at Darren. Darren finally gets it.

DARREN
Yeah Cole... you hide first.

It happens too quick for Cole to react. Darren and Tommy shove Cole backwards. He stumbles into the darkness of the crawl space.

COLE
Don't!

Tommy slams the door closed. Darren turns the lock. They crack smiles at each other as Cole bangs on the door.

The BANGING GOES ON FOR A FEW SECONDS AND THEN IT JUST STOPS.

SILENCE.

Darren and Tommy look at each other and then back at the crawl space door.

Then THE SCREAMING BEGINS.

Darren and Tommy back away from the door as COLE SCREAMS IN TERROR at the top of his lungs. He CRASHES OVER AND OVER against the door. HIS BODY SLAMMING AGAINST THE WOOD. The DOOR RATTLES like it's going to break off its hinges.

The two boys are statues as Cole's BLOOD CHILLING YELLS FILLS THE HALLWAY.

FOOTSTEPS SPIKE THE AIR AS children and mothers come running down the hall. Lynn is one of them.

Darren's mother turns the corner.

DARREN'S MOTHER
What the hell's happening?

She looks to the closet. THE HIGH PITCHED SCREAMS CUT THROUGH THE HALL.

LYNN
It's Cole!

Lynn and Darren's mom rush to the door and turn the knob... The door flies open. Cole is seemingly thrown out. He lands right into his mother's arms. Unconscious.

Darren's mom looks into the crawl space - there's nothing inside except a couple packing boxes in the back. She looks to Lynn. Beat.

LYNN
(whispers)
Help me get him in the car.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL RECEPTION AREA - AFTERNOON

Lynn and DR. PATRICIA HILL sit on a checkered sofa in the waiting area of the hospital.

Malcolm stands in the doorway. Arms folded somberly.

LYNN
Do them again.

DR. HILL
I could. The results won't change. He did not have a seizure. He does not have any internal damage. In my opinion... He fainted.

Beat.

DR. HILL
I think he probably has a phobia of dark spaces.

Malcolm shakes his head.

MALCOLM
He doesn't.

Lynn stares at Dr. Patricia Hill.

LYNN
I know he doesn't.

Beat.

LYNN
You weren't there. He wasn't just scared like that. Something was happening. Something was very wrong.

DR. HILL

I appreciate that. I believe it... But I can not explain it. Your son is medically fine. I want him to rest for a while. but he could go home this very night.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - EVENING

Cole lays rigid in the hospital bed. His eyes fixed at the end of the room.

Malcolm quietly enters the room. Cole sees him and visibly relaxes.

MALCOLM
We shouldn't schedule sessions anymore. I'll just follow you around.

Cole smiles weakly as Malcolm walks to the side of the bed. He pulls a r
Takes a seat. Beat.

MALCOLM
You okay?

Cole thinks about it. Shakes his head, "No."

MALCOLM
Tough time sleeping?

Cole nods, "Yes."

Beat. Malcolm notices Cole's legs emerging from under the hospital gown. Cole is wearing A MAN'S DRESS SOCKS. The baggy folds ride up all the way to his knees.

MALCOLM
Your father ever tell you bed time stories?

COLE
Yes.

Malcolm looks at Cole. Malcolm makes a decision. He takes off his jacket and drapes it over the back of the chair. Beat.

MALCOLM
Once upon a time there was a prince, who was being driven around... He drove around for a long long time... Driving and driving... It was a long trip... He fell asleep...
(beat)
When he woke up, they were still driving...The long drive went on-

COLE
Dr. Crowe.

MALCOLM
Yes.

COLE
You told bedtime stories before?

MALCOLM
No.

COLE
You have to add some twists and stuff. Maybe they run out of gas.

MALCOLM
No gas, that's good.

They sit in silence. Malcolm works on a new plot in his head.

COLE
Tell me a story about why you're sad.

Beat.

MALCOLM
Am I sad?

Cole nods, "Yes."

MALCOLM
How do you know?

COLE
Your eyes told me.

Beat. Malcolm's affected by his client.

MALCOLM
I can't tell you things about my personal-

Malcolm stares at the tired child sitting before him in the hospital bed.

Beat.

MALCOLM
...Once upon a time there was this person named Malcolm. He worked with children. Loved it more than anything.
(smiles)
Then one night, he finds out he made a mistake with one of them. Didn't help that one at all. He thinks about that one a lot. Can't forget.

Malcolm's hand unknowingly moves to his side.

MALCOLM
Ever since then, things have been different. He's become messed up. Confused. Angry. Not the same person he used to be.
(beat)
His wife doesn't like the person he's become. They don't speak anymore. They're like strangers.

Malcolm breaks from his thoughts and looks at Cole who watches him with unwavering attention. Malcolm smiles.

MALCOLM
And then one day this person Malcolm meets a wonderful boy who reminds him of that one. Reminds him a lot of that one. Malcolm decides to try to help this new boy. He thinks maybe if he can help this boy, it would be like helping that one too.

Malcolm leans forward, whispers with emotional eyes.

MALCOLM
I don't know how the story ends. I hope it's a happy ending.

COLE
Me too.

Cole looks at Malcolm's emotional eyes. Cole stares at Malcolm a long time.

COLE
(soft)
You're messed up too?

Malcolm nods "yes." Cole thinks to himself.

EVERYTHING THAT'S SAID FROM THIS POINT ON IS WHISPERED.

COLE
I want to tell you my secret now.

Malcolm blinks very slowly. He barely gets the words out.

MALCOLM
I'm listening.

Cole takes an eternal pause. A silent tension engulfs them both.

COLE
...I see people.

MALCOLM
I don't understand.

COLE
I see dead people... Some of them scare me.

Beat.

MALCOLM
In your dreams?

Cole shakes his head, "No."

MALCOLM
When you're awake?

Cole nods, "Yes."

MALCOLM
Dead people, like in graves and coffins?

COLE
No, walking around, like regular people...They can't see each other. Some of them don't know they're dead.

MALCOLM
They don't know they're dead?

Beat.

COLE
I see ghosts.

Malcolm becomes completely motionless. He and Cole stare at each other a long time.

COLE
They tell me things.

MALCOLM
What type of things?

COLE
Stories... Things that happened to them... Things that happened to people they know.

Beat.

MALCOLM
How often do you see them?

COLE
All the time. They're everywhere.

Beat.

MALCOLM
Cole.

COLE
Yes.

MALCOLM
Are there ghosts in this room right now?

Cole nods, "Yes." Beat.

COLE
You won't tell anyone my secret right?

MALCOLM
...No.

COLE
Will you stay here till I fall asleep?

Malcolm nods. "Yes." Cole pulls the covers up to his chin. Malcolm is very still and stares at Cole.

MALCOLM'S EYES - slowly turn and survey the room. They find nothing. Malcolm returns to watching Cole.

COLE'S EYES LOOK AROUND THE ROOM WARILY... WE MOVE IN ON THEM - TILL HIS EYES FILL THE FRAME.

WE PULL BACK FROM COLE'S BLACK EYES...

PULL BACK TO THE FOOT OF THE BED...

PULL BACK EVEN FARTHER REVEALING A ROOM FILLED WITH PEOPLE. HOSPITAL PATIENTS... SOME OLD, SOME YOUNG... SOME ARE DRESSED IN MODERN HOSPITAL GOWNS... SOME FROM DECADES PAST.

THEY ALL STAND SILENTLY AROUND COLE'S BED... WATCHING. WAITING.

CUT TO:

EXT. BUS STOP - NIGHT

Malcolm sits in silence waiting at the bus stop. He pulls the tape recorder out of his bag. Brings it to his mouth. Clicks it on.

MALCOLM
Cole...
(beat)
His pathology is more severe than initially assessed.
(beat)
He's suffering from visual hallucinations, paranoia - Symptoms of some kind of school age Schizophrenia.
(beat)
Medication and hospitalization may be required.

CLICK. Malcolm's hand with the tape recorder drops into his lap.

MALCOLM
(whispers)
He's getting worse.

Malcolm stares into the night. He slowly brings the tape back up to his lips.

MALCOLM
At the close of the week, I'll make the recommendation to transfer Cole to another psychologist. The remaining sessions will be spent preparing Cole for the transfer.

CLICK.

Malcolm sits alone at the bus stop, as thoughts crash like thunder in his head.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - EVENING

The STREETS TURN RED as Lynn drives home from the hospital in silence. She glances down to her right.

Cole is curled up asleep on the passenger seat, back in his regular clothes, a tiny party hat clutched in his hand. He looks like a four year old.

The sight of him exhausted and still, hits Lynn hard

Lynn's face drowns in deep concern. She lays a hand on Cole's head as she drives.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - EVENING

Lynn lays Cole gently on his bed next to his German Shepherd Puppy. Cole curls up with Sebastian.

Lynn watches the two youngsters sleep for a moment, before pulling Cole's sweater from over her shoulder. She begins to fold it. Her attention is drawn to the sweater. She fingers the fabric of the back. IT'S RIPPED. Her eyes move to Cole. In the middle of the back of his T-shirt are THREE SMALL TEARS. Lynn pushes the fabric open with her fingers and sees DEEP FINGERNAIL LIKE SCRATCHES on his skin.

Lynn look around helplessly, fear creeping into her eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. HALL - EVENING

Lynn emerges from Cole's room. She turns OFF THE HALL LIGHTS as she moves into her room and closes the door.

Silence. The house is drowned in shadows.

The thermostat on the wall reads seventy-eight degrees.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HALL - NIGHT

Late night. An unnatural silence fills the house.

The thermostat on the wall now reads, fifty-two degrees.

A LIGHT TURNS ON FROM UNDER COLE'S DOOR.

The door opens a crack. Cole's tiny face peeks out. Eyes scan the darkness.

The door opens a little bit more. Cole's knees are pressed together. His body dances a little. Cole has to pee. He moves cautiously into the hall.

Cole moves briskly to a door halfway down the corridor. Opens it. Cole turns on the LIGHT IN THE BATHROOM.

He checks behind the shower curtain, before he turns his back and pees into the toilet.

A LARGE FIGURE MOVES PAST THE DOORWAY.

Cole instantly stops peeing. His body becomes very still. He slowly reaches for the toilet handle and flushes. He closes his pants and turns. He doesn't come out of the bathroom at first. He just stands there and stares into the darkness of the hall. HIS BREATH FORMS TINY CLOUDS IN THE COLD AIR.

Beat. Cole finally steps out into the hallway. His eyes catch a SLANT OF LIGHT now coming from the kitchen.

Cole hesitates before moving towards it. He moves down the hall and turns the corner - coming to a stop in the doorway of the kitchen.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Cole stares at the back of a person cooking food on the stove. Cole's fear slowly fades away. Beat.

COLE
Momma?
(beat)
Dream about daddy again?

The person turns. It's not Lynn. It's a strange woman. The woman's face is demented. A purple gash cuts across her forehead.

WOMAN
DINNER'S - NOT -
READY!

Cole's face turns the color of ash.

WOMAN
What are you going to do?

Cole backs up to the doorway.

WOMAN
You can't hurt me anymore!

The woman smiles menacingly as she thrusts her wrists forward... They've been savagely cut. She moves towards Cole.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Cole turns and runs down the hall. THE SOUND OF THE WOMAN'S FOOTSTEPS AND FLOWING ROBE CHASE HIM.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sebastian rises to his feet on the bed and BARKS VIOLENTLY as Cole bursts in.

Cole runs across his room. The crazed woman enters the room behind him.

Cole heads right for the red tent seated in the corner with the "DO NOT TOUCH" sign on it. He scurries in. His legs disappear as the flap to the tent closes behind him.

CUT TO:

INT. TENT - NIGHT

Cole is curled up in the tent. He lays still for a moment before reaching over and FLICKING ON A FLASH LIGHT.

The red interior of the tent gets LIT UP.

It's a striking sight. The walls of the tent are lined with religious pictures taped to the walls. Tiny statues of saints are leaned up against the sides. We see the statue Cole stole from the church is in here... This tent is a sanctuary made by an eight year old to hide in.

COLE WATCHES THE ENTRANCE FLAP AND LISTENS TO THE WOMAN'S BREATHING OUTSIDE.

THE ENTRANCE FLAP SITS STILL. IT OPENS AS SOMETHING COMES TEARING IN...

COLE YELLS AS IT FLIES INTO HIS LAP.

Cole looks down to find his puppy shivering violently. Cole holds Sebastian tight in his arms. He closes his eyes and begins to rock slowly back and forth.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GYMNASIUM STAGE - AFTERNOON

The LIGHTS IN THE GYM GO DOWN. THE SPOT LIGHT OPENS ON THE STAGE AS THE CURTAINS MOVE TO THE SIDES...

A sign to the side of the stage reads, "The third and fourth grade presents - Rudyard Kipling's 'The Jungle Book'."

The parents APPLAUD AS TOMMY TAMMISIMO WALKS OUT ON STAGE in a villager's outfit.

TOMMY
There once was a boy, very different than other boys. He lived in the jungle, and he could talk with the animals.

THE AUDIENCE APPLAUDS AS THE REST OF THE ACTORS COME OUT. Some are villagers, others are dressed as trees and animals.

Cole comes on stage holding a painted cardboard monkey.

MALCOLM APPLAUDS FROM THE BACK OF THE GYMNASIUM.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL CORRIDOR - AFTERNOON

The arched halls of the private school are lined with posted drawings and test papers.

Cole and Malcolm walk down an empty hall.

COLE
...You keep talking serious. I don't want to talk serious.

MALCOLM
I'm afraid we have to.

Beat.

COLE
Did you like the play?

MALCOLM
Yes it was very well done.
(beat)
So there are these new people I want you to meet. They're going to really like you.

COLE
Sure you don't think the play sucks big time?

MALCOLM
No, I don't think it sucks big time.

COLE
Tommy Tammisimo's parents made him take acting classes in New York. Tommy said everybody else in the play sucked big time.

Beat.

MALCOLM
These new people are very good. Top of their field. They have a gift...They can help you.

COLE
What did you like best about the play?

MALCOLM
-Forget the play Cole. We have to talk about-

COLE
No I won't. I won't talk about anything serious. Talk about the play. I want to talk about the play.

Malcolm stops their walk.

MALCOLM
You want to know what I thought about the play. Okay. I thought it was heartbreaking. I saw you up there with the smallest part, with no dialogue, hiding behind a cardboard monkey so no one would see you - so no one would look at you.

Beat.

MALCOLM
I saw you wanting so desperately to be a part of it all - but you couldn't. You can't be a part of anything.
(emotional)
Anything else you want to talk about?

Cole's face trembles. He turns and runs down the hall. His shoes SQUEAK ON THE WOOD FLOORS AS HE TURNS THE CORNER.

Malcolm stands alone in the corridor. Eyes closing in frustration.

CUT TO:

INT. HALL AFTERNOON

Malcolm finds Cole hiding in a corner by a set of doors. Malcolm kneels down next to him.

MALCOLM
I'm sorry Cole. I'm truly sorry.

Malcolm notices Cole's expression.

MALCOLM
What's wrong?

Cole points to the doors.

MALCOLM
Is something in there?

Cole doesn't say anything. Beat.

Malcolm gets up and gently pushes open the doors and steps in.

CUT TO:

INT. STAIRWELL - AFTERNOON

It's a large shadowy stairwell. Malcolm squints his eyes and looks around.

THE SOUND OF THE DOOR OPENING BEHIND HIM IS HEARD. Cole steps in. He moves close to Malcolm.

Cole is trembling slightly.

MALCOLM
What is it?

Malcolm follows the child's gaze to the top of the stairs.

MALCOLM
I don't see.

Beat.

COLE
Be real still.

Malcolm looks to Cole and then turns back to the top of the stairs. Malcolm's body becomes very still. Beat.

COLE
Sometimes you feel it inside. Like you're falling down real fast, but you're really just standing still.

Malcolm looks at the empty stairwell.

COLE
You feel prickly things on the back of your neck?

Beat.

MALCOLM
I do actually.

COLE
The tiny hairs on your arm.
Are they all standing up?

Malcolm glances at Cole. Surprise on his face.

MALCOLM
-Yes.

Beat.

COLE
That's them.

MALCOLM
Them?

Malcolm looks at the empty stairwell and then back to Cole.

Nothing is said for a few moments.

MALCOLM
I don't see anything.
(beat)
Are you sure they're there?
(beat)
Cole?

Malcolm turns back to Cole, he finds the child with tears in his eyes. Cole looks at Malcolm desperately.

COLE
Make them go away.

Malcolm stares helplessly.

MALCOLM
(whispers)
I don't know how.

Malcolm gently leads Cole away from the stairs.

COLE GLANCES BACK AS HE MOVES OUT OF THE STAIRWELL.

COLE'S P.O.V. - The light dangling at the top of the stairs sways a little... But so do THE THREE BODIES HANGING BY THEIR NECKS FROM A WOODEN BEAM.

It's a truly horrific sight. A BLACK MAN in britches and no shirt , face beaten to a pulp, hangs in the center. A WHITE WOMAN in a torn white frilly dress - tears soaking her face, hangs to the right. A small MIXED RACE CHILD in half pants, hangs to their left. The family stares at Cole. They follow Cole with their tortured eyes as he exits the stairwell.

CUT TO:

EXT. INDEPENDENCE HALL - NIGHT

Malcolm walks from the bus stop over the cobblestone streets in front of Independence Hall. The streets are quiet and dark. Night time has fallen over the city.

Malcolm passes a sign listing all the historical dates of the buildings in the area. "1778, 1792, 1794..."

Malcolm is lost in his thoughts as he walks home.

He slowly comes to a stop in front of an old building. He holds his arm up. Uses his other hand to gently touch the RAISED HAIRS on his arm's surface.

Malcolm looks up slowly. Looks around. The dark shadows fill the corners of the historic buildings...

Malcolm stares into the darkness... Beat.

MALCOLM
(whispers)
...Is anyone there?

A long moment as he waits. The shadows seem to move, then become still.

Malcolm shakes off the moment. He returns his hands to his pockets as he moves through the dark streets of Philadelphia to his home.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATE NIGHT

Late evening. Anna huddles under a blanket on the sofa and watches television.

Malcolm enters the room and takes a seat in the reading chair next to her.

MALCOLM
I'm referring the client.

Anna waits a moment, before raising the remote and turning off the television. She stares quietly at the darkened screen.

MALCOLM
I can't help him.

Anna doesn't respond.

MALCOLM
Don't you want to tell me
how you used to respect me?
Don't you want to tell me
how I'm failing this boy now
like I failed Vincent Gray?...
Go ahead. You can say it.
(beat)
I just can't handle the silence
anymore.
(beat)
Goddammit Anna speak to
me!

Anna is shaken. She's about to cry. Her eyes nervously look up. Beat.

MALCOLM
What happened to us? We
used to be best friends.

Beat. The PHONE RINGS IN ANOTHER ROOM. Anna closes her eyes.

MALCOLM
Please let it ring.

Anna doesn't move. The PHONE RINGS AGAIN. Beat.

Anna opens her eyes and throws off her blanket. Malcolm watches her leave the room.

He waits alone in the emptiness of the living room. After a long while, he gets up and heads for his basement door.

He passes the doorway to the kitchen. ANNA'S VOICE CAN BE HEARD SPEAKING ON THE PHONE.

ANNA
I can't talk now.

Malcolm doesn't hear anything as Anna listens to the person on the phone. He starts for the basement door again.

ANNA
(whisper)
I thought about you too.

Malcolm stands frozen in the hall. Anna's HUSHED WORDS RING IN THE AIR LIKE A GUN BLAST.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Lynn adjusts the thermostat as she tries to keep herself warm.

LYNN
I don't care what they say,
this thing is definitely
broken.

Lynn fiddles with the dials, then returns to the dinner table where Cole is seated. Cole's wearing a pair of his father's extra large LEATHER GLOVES. Cole's small hands don't even fill the palm area. Cole has difficulty trying to pick up his milk glass with the gloves.

LYNN
Take em off.

Cole removes the gloves from his hand and places them next to his plate.

LYNN
I don't want them on my
table.

Cole moves them to the floor.

Lynn is irritated, this is a sore point between them.

Lynn and Cole eat quietly. Beat.

LYNN
I saw what was in your bureau drawer when I was cleaning.

Cole looks up. An anxious expression on his face. Beat.

LYNN
You got something you want to confess?

Cole just stares.

LYNN
The bumble bee pendant. Why do you keep taking it?

Cole looks down at his lap.

LYNN
It was Grandma's. It's not for playing.
(beat)
What if it broke? You know how sad I'd be.

COLE
You'd cry. Cause you miss grandma so much.

LYNN
(soft)
That's right. So why do you take it sweetheart?

COLE
Sometimes people think they lose things and they didn't really lose them. It just gets moved.

LYNN
Did you move the bumble bee pendant?

Cole shakes his head. "No." Lynn just stares.

LYNN
You didn't take it before. You didn't take it the time after that. And now, you didn't take it again?

COLE
Don't get mad.

LYNN
So who moved it?

Cole doesn't answer.

LYNN
There's only two of us.
(beat)
Maybe someone came in our house - took the bumble bee pendant out of my closet, and then laid it nicely in your drawer?
(beat)
Is that what happened?

COLE
(soft)
Maybe.

Lynn just stares at Cole.

LYNN
I'm so tired Cole. I'm tired in my body. I'm tired in my mind. I'm tired in my heart. I need a little help here.
(beat)
I don't know if you noticed - but our little family isn't doing so good.

Lynn folds her napkin quietly.

LYNN
I'm praying for us, but I must not be praying right.
(Beat)
It looks like we're just going to have to answer each other's prayers. If we can't talk to each other - we're not going to make it.
(Beat)
Now baby, tell me... I won't be mad honey... Did you take the bumble bee pendant?

Beat. Cole's eyes start to water up.

COLE
No.

Lynn goes cold.

LYNN
You've had enough roast beef. You need to go upstairs now.

Cole just stares at his mother's expression.

LYNN
(yells)
Go!

Cole gets up - never taking his eyes off his mother - and leaves the room.

CUT TO:

INT. HALL - NIGHT

Cole enters the DARK HALLWAY. He gets startled by the SOUND OF HIS PUPPY GROWLING.

Sebastian comes racing down the hall and scurries past Cole. Cole watches his puppy dart into the living room and under a couch.

Cole slowly turns back and looks down the hall.

THE DOOR TO COLE'S ROOM SITS AT THE END OF THE CORRIDOR. IT'S ALMOST SHUT. COLE WATCHES AS THE DOOR BEGINS TO OPEN VERY SLOWLY. IT OPENS WIDE. COLE DOESN'T MOVE AN INCH.

SUDDENLY IN THE STILLNESS AND THE DARKNESS, A SMALL FIGURE SCURRIES FROM ANOTHER BEDROOM INTO THE BLACKNESS OF COLE'S ROOM. IT HAPPENS LIKE A FLASH.

Cole stops breathing.

THE FIGURE SLOWLY STEPS OUT FROM COLE'S DOORWAY.

IT'S A BOY. A FEW YEARS OLDER THAN COLE.

THE BOY WHISPERS IN A LOW HOARSE VOICE.

BOY
Come on... I'll show you where my dad keeps his gun... Come on.

THE BOY TURNS. WE SEE THAT THE BACK OF HIS HEAD IS MISSING AS HE DISAPPEARS INTO THE DARKNESS OF COLE'S ROOM.

Cole is too terrified to move.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Lynn is at the sink, doing dishes.

COLE
Momma.

Lynn turns - surprised to hear her son's voice. Lynn's eyes are red from crying. She wipes them quickly with the back of her hand.

Mother and son look at each other. Beat.

COLE
If you're not very mad... Can I sleep in your room tonight?

Lynn fights back some tears.

LYNN
I'm not very mad.

Lynn walks over and hugs him. Beat.

LYNN
Baby... Why are you shaking?

Cole doesn't answer.

LYNN
Cole, what's wrong?

Cole just closes his eyes and holds his mom tight.

LYNN
(desperate)
...Please tell me.

Cole doesn't say a word.

LYNN
(crying)
Please.

CUT TO:

INT. ANTIQUE STORE - AFTERNOON

We are in an antique store. Filled floor to ceiling with furniture and knickknacks.

Anna stands across a glass cabinet from a silver haired female CUSTOMER. An antique necklace sits on a velvet pad between them.

ANNA
Do you feel longing?

CUSTOMER
What do you mean?

ANNA
When I touch this piece I feel a longing. I imagine the person who owned this loved someone deeply she couldn't be with.

The silver haired woman studies Anna.

CUSTOMER
A lot of the pieces in this store give me feelings. I think maybe when people own things and then they pass away - a part of themselves gets printed on those things - like fingerprints.

The silver haired woman touches the necklace gently with her fingertips. Beat.

CUSTOMER
I think I feel something.

The woman and Anna smile at each other.

CUT TO:

INT. ANTIQUE STORE - AFTERNOON

Anna moves to the back desk where SEAN, a handsome man in his mid thirties comes out.

Anna tilts the necklace towards him.

ANNA
She really likes it.

SEAN
Sometimes I think the customers buy more for you than for my pieces.

Anna smiles as she takes a seat at her desk. She prepares the paperwork.

ANNA
I'm kind of sad. It's one of my favorites.

SEAN
Perhaps you'll buy it back from her one day.

ANNA
Yeah sure.

Anna starts filling out the paper work. Sean picks up the necklace. He moves behind Anna and holds it in front of her. She doesn't respond. He wait quietly.

Then Anna reaches up and lifts her hair. Sean lays the necklace around her neck. He closes the silver clasp. He hesitates. Anna's eyes register the extra time.

Sean's hand touches Anna's neck softly. Anna becomes still. His fingers barely touch her skin. Anna isn't breathing.

A SHATTERING DOOR SLAM ECHOES THROUGH THE STORE. Anna and Jeffery pull apart. They rush past the silver haired woman to the front of the store. They find the glass front door cracked in a spider web pattern

They carefully push open the door and step out onto the sidewalk. Look around. No one in sight.

Anna stares down the empty street. She touches the antique necklace around her neck, a concerned expression on her face.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - AFTERNOON

Malcolm walks angrily down the sidewalk. He stops as his hand goes to his side. He winces with pain as he keeps walking.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - DAY

Cole and Lynn ride home with a back seat full of groceries.

Cole finishes off a cherry popsicle as he watches out the window.

Lynn looks over.

LYNN
Let's rent a movie.

Cole bites off the last of the popsicle and glances at his mom.

LYNN
Your pick.

Cole stares at his mom quietly.

LYNN
It can even have Jean Claude
Van Damme in it if you want.

Cole smiles at that. He nods, "Yes" joyfully.

Lynn's face shows a little happiness for the first time. A little hope enters her eyes. She turns onto their street.

Cole gazes out the front windshield as the car moves towards home.

COLE'S POV- a woman in a flowing white dress from the 40's suddenly walks into the middle of the street.

COLE
(yells)
Momma look out!

The woman in the white dress turns. Her hand rests on her stomach. WE SEE SHE IS PREGNANT.

Lynn slams the brakes... Too late.

THE WOMAN SMASHES INTO THE FRONT GRILL OF THE CAR... HER TERROR STRICKEN FACE COMES OVER THE HOOD AND CRASHES RIGHT THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD IN A SHOWER OF BLOOD AND GLASS...

COLE SCREAMS. LYNN SCREAMS... THE CAR SCREECHES TO A STOP IN THE MIDDLE OF A CONGESTED STREET.

The line of cars behind them suddenly hit their brakes and swerve to one side avoiding a mass collision. After a few seconds, the entire intersection has come to a halt.

Cole who has shut his eyes... slowly opens them.

He looks around fearfully. His eyes move to the windshield. No broken glass. No blood. And no woman. Cole looks out through the pristine windshield onto the street where cars are stopped and staring all around him.

Cole slowly looks over to his mother. He finds her staring at him in complete and utter disbelief. Her hands clutch the wheel. The whites of her knuckles showing her fear. She has no idea why he screamed.

CUT TO:

INT. DEN - AFTERNOON

The den is very quiet. Cole and Malcolm sit around the multi-colored table. Malcolm leans back in his folding chair - arms folded over his chest. Cole sits slumped over the table - eyes peering out over his arms.

They both look like shit.

COLE
You don't wanna ask me questions today?

Malcolm nods, "No." Beat.

COLE
Can I ask you then?

MALCOLM
Yes.

COLE
What do you want more than anything?

MALCOLM
I don't know.

COLE
I told you what I want.

MALCOLM
I don't know Cole.

COLE
Why don't you think about it for a while.

Malcolm doesn't respond. Cole watches him. Beat.

COLE
You want to see the magic penny trick?

Cole pulls out a penny from his pocket.

MALCOLM
Maybe later Cole.

The room falls into silence again. Beat. Cole speaks very softly.

COLE
You don't have to keep your promise.

Malcolm stares across at Cole.

COLE
About making me happy like other kids... I know I can't be like that.

Malcolm leans forward. His eyes fill with emotion.

MALCOLM
I'm sorry Cole, I don't know how to help you. I'm overwhelmed.
(Beat)
Someone else can help you. Someone else can make you happy.

Tears fall down Malcolm's cheek.

COLE
Don't cry.

It takes a second, but Cole begins tearing up to.

Cole wipes his eyes with his sleeve. They sit quietly and stare at each other. Beat.

Cole whispers.

COLE
Dr. Crowe?

MALCOLM
Yes.

COLE
You believe me right?

A long pause.

COLE
Dr. Crowe you believe my secret right?

MALCOLM
What does it matter?

Beat.

COLE
Cause if you don't believe me... Then you can't help me.

Cole puts down his penny in front of Malcolm. Beat.

COLE
Some magic's real.

CUT TO:

INT. BASEMENT - AFTERNOON

Malcolm sits stoically at his desk in his basement. His eyes gaze at the dusty FRAMED CERTIFICATE FROM THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA shoved between two packing boxes.

Malcolm leans his head back against the chair. Stares into the shadows. Drowns in his thoughts.

Beat. THE CHAIR CREAKS as he slowly sits up again. Malcolm's eyes scan the room and come to a stop on a box marked with the label...

"SESSION TAPES - VINCENT GRAY"

CUT TO:

INT. BASEMENT - AFTERNOON

A tape slides into the tape player seated on Malcolm's desk. Malcolm hits play.

THE SOUND OF A DOOR OPENING AND CLOSING IS HEARD.

MALCOLM
(on tape)
Sorry about that. Hope I didn't leave you alone too long.

WE HEAR A CHAIR MOVE AS MALCOLM SITS DOWN. And then SILENCE. Beat.

MALCOLM
(on tape)
Vincent... Why are you crying?
(beat)
Vincent?

A TEN YEAR OLD'S VOICE ANSWERS.

VINCENT
(on tape crying)
Yes?

MALCOLM
(on tape)
What happened?
(beat)
Did something upset you?

Beat. VINCENT SNIFFLES.

VINCENT
(on tape)
You won't believe.

MALCOLM
(on tape)
I won't believe what?

Beat.

VINCENT
(on tape)
I don't want to talk anymore.
I want to go home now okay?
I want to go home.

Beat.

MALCOLM
(on tape)
Okay Vincent, you can go
home.

CLICK. THE TAPE GOES TO SILENCE.

Malcolm just sits in the shadowy basement. He doesn't move for a while.

Then he hits the rewind button. Stops it. Presses play.

MALCOLM
(on tape)
Sorry about that. Hope I
didn't leave you alone too-

Malcolm hits the rewind button again. Lets it rewind for a while. Presses play.

MALCOLM
(on tape)
...Why do you want to be an
architect like your dad?

THE SOUND OF A DOOR OPENING IS HEARD.

SECRETARY
(on tape)
Excuse me, Doctor Reed is
on line two.

MALCOLM
(on tape)
Vincent, I have to take this.
I'll just be a minute.

VINCENT
(on tape)
Okay.

FOOTSTEPS AS MALCOLM AND THE SECRETARY LEAVE THE ROOM. THE DOOR CLOSES. AND THE SILENCE.

Nothing happens for a long time. AND THEN WE HEAR A SUDDEN CHAIR SCREECH ACROSS THE FLOOR. VINCENT'S BREATHING QUICKENS.

A SLIGHT STATIC STARTS TO FILTER IN ON THE TAPE.

Malcolm's eyes are locked on the spool of audio tape as it spins in the player.

Malcolm's fingers move to the volume dial. He turns it way up. THE STATIC NOISE FROM THE TAPE FILLS THE BASEMENT.

Malcolm leans closer to the tape player. Closes his eyes and listens... Beat.

DEEP IN THE STATIC... ANOTHER SOUND EMERGES. WHISPERING.

A MAN'S VOICE IS HEARD IN THE ROOM WITH VINCENT.

MAN'S WHISPERING
(on tape)
Familia... No dejen que esto
me pase... Mi familia... Yo
no quiero morir... Familia...

Malcolm mouth opens in disbelief.

MALCOLM
...Jesus Christ.

CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH - LATE AFTERNOON

Cole guides two army soldiers up a stack of bibles. The rest of the plastic army waits on the pew below.

Cole hears hurried footsteps and looks up.

Malcolm stands in the aisle a little out of breath. He holds his hand to his side as he winces a bit.

MALCOLM
Hello again.

COLE
You been running around?

Malcolm nods, "Yes."

COLE
It make you feel better?

Malcolm takes a seat in the pew.

COLE
I like to run around. It's good exercise.
(beat)
You want to ask me questions now?

Malcolm shakes his head, "No."

COLE
You want to play soldiers?

Cole holds up his plastic rifleman.

MALCOLM
Maybe later.

Beat.

COLE
Something happened didn't it?

MALCOLM
Yes it did.

COLE
Are you wiggin out?

MALCOLM
Yes I am.

COLE
Were not gonna start crying again are we?

MALCOLM
No we're not.

COLE
What happened?

Beat.

MALCOLM
Do you know what 'Yo no quiero morir' is?

Cole shakes his head, "No."

MALCOLM
It's Spanish. It means... 'I don't want to die.'

Malcolm leans forward slowly and speaks in a hushed tone.

MALCOLM
These people... People that died and are still hanging around. Maybe they weren't ready to go. Maybe they wake up that morning thinking they have a thousand things to do and a thousand days left to do them in... And then all of a sudden, it's all taken away. No one asked them. It's just gone...

Cole studies Malcolm's passionate face. A new face.

COLE
You really look better.

MALCOLM
Maybe some of them feel cheated. So they pretend they're still alive... Not even knowing, they're pretending...

COLE
You have nice red in your cheeks now.

MALCOLM
But all of them have things left to be said. They just need to talk like everyone else. Like you and me. People need to express themselves and be heard. It's a part of being a human being. It's everything I believe in and I didn't believe it.

Cole looks at Malcolm.

COLE
You believe now?

Malcolm's stare is unwavering.

MALCOLM
I believe both of you now.
(beat)
And I think I might know how to make them go away.

COLE
You do?

Malcolm nods "Yes."

MALCOLM
You need to help them.
(beat)
I think they know you're one of those very rare people that can see them. So they're drawn to you. They try to talk to you. Ask you things... And when you don't respond, when you hide from them... They try harder. They get angry. They lose control of all the rage and anger they feel inside.
(Beat)
I think you can help them move on. Help them say whatever it is they need to say.

Beat. Cole is quiet for a while.

COLE
They're mad I don't listen.

MALCOLM
Right. Everyone wants to be heard. Everyone.

Cole takes a big sigh. Fiddles with his riflemen.

COLE
What if they don't want help? What if they're just angry and they want to hurt somebody?

MALCOLM
I don't think that's the way it works Cole.

Cole looks nervous.

COLE
How do you know for sure?

Malcolm's eyes are drawn to Cole's arm. Peeking out from under his shirt sleeve are a set of cuts. Malcolm gazes at them.

MALCOLM
I don't.

Cole and Malcolm sit silently in the back of the church.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Malcolm enters his house. The place is in darkness. He flicks on a LAMP seated on the hall table.

His eyes immediately go to the ANTIQUE NECKLACE seated in the opened box on the table. A card addressed to Anna sits on top. It reads,

"To its rightful owner."

Malcolm's face turns to stone.

CUT TO:

INT. HALL - NIGHT

A SLIVER OF LIGHT SEEPS OUT FROM UNDER HIS BEDROOM DOOR.

Malcolm moves down the hall. Anger growing in each step.

The SOUNDS OF ANNA'S MUFFLED VOICE ON THE PHONE FILTER THROUGH THE DOOR.

Malcolm's a ball of tension as he moves for the bedroom. His hand touches the knob as he hears...

ANNA
(o.s.)
You have to stop.

Something in her voice makes Malcolm stop as if she's talking to him. His hand rests on the knob. Beat.

ANNA
(o.s.)
... I'm not prepared to do this.
(beat)
I don't want to be ashamed of that. I don't want to have to make excuses for that. I don't want to explain it either.
(beat)
Guilt is not something I want to add to my list of pains.

Malcolm's hand pulls away from the door knob.

CUT TO:

INT. BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

The house is silent. No movement.

Cole is in his pajamas asleep on the floor of the

RED TENT.

Curled up next to him is Sebastian. They sleep surrounded by statues and pictures.

Cole's eyes open as he hears HIS MOTHER'S DISTANT VOICE.

LYNN
Cole...
(beat)
Cole what's happening...

Cole quickly gets up and rushes out of the tent. He doesn't realize, the entrance flap to the tent is LEFT OPEN.

CUT TO:

INT. HALL - NIGHT

He doesn't stop as he moves through the shadowy hall and pushes open his mother's bedroom door.

CUT TO:

INT. LYNN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Cole looks over the room carefully. Everything is still.

HIS MOTHER'S VOICE turns his attention back to the bed.

LYNN
Cole, what's happening to
you?

Cole looks down and finds his mother laying in her bed. Her face contorted in deep sadness as she speaks in her sleep.

LYNN
Why won't you tell me?

Cole moves to his mother's side. Touches her face with his tiny fingers.

COLE
(whispers)
Momma you sleep now.

His touch seems to have an affect. Lynn becomes still in her sleep. Cole watches her carefully.

CUT TO:

INT. HALL - NIGHT

Cole closes the door to his mother's bedroom shut. He stands still in the hallway. Let's out a heavy sigh...

HIS BREATH ROLLS IN A TINY CLOUD IN FRONT OF HIM.

Cole's brow furrows. He breathes again. This time intentionally. Watches as his breath materializes in the suddenly ice cold air.

Every muscle in Cole's eight year old body becomes rigid. He takes a second before moving through the inky darkness of the hall.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Cole steps back into his bedroom and studies the shadows carefully. He slowly moves to his tent and crawls in legs first. His eyes watch the bedroom for any sign of movement.

Once in the tent, he closes the flap.

CUT TO:

INT. TENT - NIGHT

When Cole turns around, he stops breathing.

AN EIGHT YEAR OLD GIRL VOMITS ON HERSELF IN HIS TENT . She finishes and looks up at Cole with drawn eyes.

GIRL
I'm feeling much better now.

The girl reaches out with her withered and emaciated hands - tiny tubes hang from her wrists. She scratches Cole as he tumbles back terrified out of the tent.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVINGROOM - NIGHT

Cole runs hard out of his bedroom and down the hall to the living room. He gets down on the ground and slides under the wooden legged couch.

Sebastian is already huddled in fear under the couch. Cole presses as far back as he can and waits.

COLE'S P.O.V. - is of the living room floor. Chair legs. Coffee table base. Rugs... Everything is still until a set of bare feet walk across the room.

Cole becomes very still. The feet stop right at the couch.

THE GIRL'S FACE suddenly appears as she bends down and vomits on the carpet. She turns her head and makes eye contact with Cole.

GIRL
I'm feeling much better.

She tries to grab Cole. Cole kicks and squirms his way farther beneath the couch.

The girl lays flat on the ground and starts to crawl under the couch. Cole and Sebastian have nowhere to go. Cole suddenly yells at her.

COLE
Wait! Wait!

The girl stops crawling. Her demented face glares at him.

BEAT. Cole makes a decision. He looks like he's going to cry - fights it back.

Cole and the little girl stare silently at each other. Cole holds her stare with trembling eyes.

He opens his mouth - it takes a while before the words come out.

COLE
Do you want to tell me
something?

CUT TO:

INT. PUBLIC BUS - DAY

A downtown Septa public bus. Malcolm and Cole are among the spattering of passengers.

They're both wearing suits.

Cole leans his head against the glass of the scratched window. Cole's large eyes drink in the passing scenery.

COLE'S P.O.V. - A dark abandoned building stretches for an entire block on one side. A MAN IN A GREY FULL BODIED UNIFORM WITH NUMBERS PRINTED ACROSS HIS CHEST... RISES OUT OF THE TALLWEEDS IN FRONT OF THE BUILDING. HE HOBBLES HIS WAY DESPERATELY TOWARDS THE BUS. HIS HANDS AND LEGS ARE SHACKLED... HE LUNGES OUT FOR COLE IN THE PASSING WINDOW.

SHACKLED MAN
My name's not Sullivan!

A GUNSHOT ECHOES IN THE AIR. THE MAN'S CHEST EXPLODES IN RED AS HE FALLS TO HIS KNEES SCREAMING.

Cole jerks back from the window.

The bus quietly drives past THE OLD PRISON BUILDING.

Cole stares down at his lap and tries not to look up anymore. Beat.

MALCOLM
I know what I want.

Cole turns to Malcolm who stares straight ahead.

MALCOLM
My goal. I know what it is. I want to speak to my wife. The way she and I used to speak. Like there was no one else in the world but us.

Beat. Malcolm turns to Cole.

MALCOLM
Does that count as a goal?

COLE
I think so.

Cole falls into deep thought as he stares down at his dress shoes. Malcolm slips back into silence.

The city bus slithers through the old Philadelphia streets working it's way downtown.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOME - AFTERNOON

A modest home sits on a corner. Its small lawn, groomed carefully. Rows of parked cars spill out from the driveway onto the streets.

People in suits and dark dresses move somberly in and out of the front doors of the home.

Cole and Malcolm join the visitors as they walk slowly towards the doors.

A frail little girl about four years of age sits in a dark dress on the swings in front of the house. Visitors say hello to her as they pass. She doesn't say anything back.

MALCOLM
Her little sister?

Cole nods. "Yes."

Malcolm and Cole watch her for a moment before following others into the modest corner home.

CUT TO:

INT. HOME - AFTERNOON

The home is packed with people. The gathering of mourners is standing room only. The AIR IS FILLED WITH DOZENS OF HUSHED CONVERSATIONS.

VISITOR #1
...sick for years...

VISITOR #2
...So much suffering...

VISITOR #3
...The doctors never seen anything like it...

VISTOR #4
...the little one's falling ill now...

VISITOR #5
...God help them...

A FAMILY PORTRAIT HANGS NEAR THE FRONT DOOR. Two girls, one bigger, one smaller sit on the ground in front of their mother and father. Their smiling faces welcome the mourners.

Malcolm and Cole are standing at the bottom of a staircase. Waiting.

The front door opens as another group arrives. Malcolm nods to Cole as the foyer fills up. The two of them quietly disappear upstairs.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

The narrow hall is lined with boxes of medical supplies. I.V. stands, sterile needles and pads are in the process of being taken away. The boxes are piled outside a closed bedroom door.

Cole stares at the shut door like he doesn't want to go in. Beat.

MALCOLM
(whispers)
God picked you. He picked you to be different.

COLE
(whispers)
He thinks I'm strong?

MALCOLM
(whispers)
No. He knows it.

Cole turns to Malcolm.

COLE
Don't go home okay?

MALCOLM
I definitely won't.

Cole turns and stares quietly at the door. He waits a long time before reaching for the doorknob.

CUT TO:

INT. GIRL'S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Cole closes the door behind him. He turns and gazes at the girl's bedroom. There's a hospital bed near the window. The walls are covered with get well cards and drawings from family, friends, and school children.

Her shelves are filled with puppets. All shapes and sizes of puppets. Next to the shelf is a puppet stage and a camcorder on a mini tripod sitting next to it.

Cole walks to the shelf and picks up a FINGER PUPPET DANCER. He places it in his pocket.

On the girl's desk, is a large collection of video cassettes. The labels read, "Puppet Show Christmas 96', Puppet Show Birthday party, "Puppet Show class trip"...

Cole reads the labels carefully before moving towards the closets. He passes the bed.

AN EMACIATED HAND REACHES OUT FROM BENEATH THE BED AND GRABS COLE'S ANKLE.

Cole jerks back startled. He watches as the girl's hand slips back under the bed. Cole stays very still. Waits. Nothing happens.

He slowly bends down. His hands touch the floor. He tilts his head and looks under the bed.

The emaciated little girl who came to his tent lays curled on the floor. Her bulging eyes glare at Cole. She moves suddenly. Thrusts a jewelry box forward. It slides across the wooden floor and stops just before Cole. Cole and the sickly girl stare at each other. Neither of them say a word.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

The room is thick with mourners. Most are gathered around the GIRL'S MOTHER, a young woman in her late twenties, who sits on the family couch and receives the many cards, hugs, and flowers that are offered as condolence.

Malcolm watches breathlessly from the doorway as Cole moves through the many adults across the room.

The girl's father, MR. COLLINS, a thin man in his late twenties, is seated on the reading chair next to a T.V. His face is stone. No one in the room dares talk to him. He stares statue like at an abstract point in the room.

COLE
Mister?

The man doesn't react. Some of the guests look oddly at the little boy standing before the man.

COLE
Excuse me Mister.

Beat. The man slowly turns and looks down at the boy standing next to him. Cole is very shaky.

Malcolm watches everything anxiously.

Cole stares at Mr. Collins.

COLE
Are you Kara's daddy?

The man's face begins to crumble. Beat. He nods, "yes" softly.

Cole holds out the jewelry box. It trembles with his hands.

The father just stares at it. Beat.

COLE
It's for you...
(beat)
She wanted to tell you
something.

The father becomes very still. His eyes fill with a storm of confusion and pain. After the longest time, the father reaches and gently takes the box out of Cole's small hands.

Cole begins to back away...

The father gazes at Cole as he melts into the crowd. The father looks down in a daze. He goes to open the jewelry box. His movements are slow and strained. He lifts the latch and opens the box.

Mr. Collins stares at an unlabeled video cassette.

CUT TO:

INT. FOYER - AFTERNOON

COLE reaches Malcolm and the two of them slip out of the house.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

People in the room start to turn as the T.V. comes on. The mother's attention is drawn across the room as she watches her husband sitting before the television and V.C.R.

THE STATIC SNOW ON THE SCREEN IS QUICKLY REPLACED BY AN IMAGE. TWO PUPPETS DANCE ON STAGE. WE HEAR KARA'S VOICE SING FOR THE PUPPETS AS THEY DANCE AROUND.

Her father's face forms the most heartbreaking of smiles as he watches the performance.

The entire room has stopped what they were doing. The girl's mother notices as everyone's attention turns away from her.

T.V.SCREEN

WE HEAR FOOTSTEPS COMING UP THE STAIRS. The puppets go limp. The entire stage gets lifted up. We see it carried away by Kara. We can view the whole bedroom now. The camera is seated on her desk in the corner.

Kara climbs in bed and pretends to be sleeping when the door opens. It's Mrs. Collins. She carries in a tray of soup and a sandwich.

LIVING ROOM

The crowd watches in riveted silence. The father never takes his eyes off of the screen. Mrs. Collins rises from the couch.

MOTHER
Jay...

No one hears her. All attention is riveted on the

T.V. SCREEN

The image of the mother prepares the meal. She uncovers the fruit and the soup. Places a straw into the drink.

And then it happens.

The image of the mother walks to a closet. Opens it. An assortment of household cleaners and sponges are kept inside. She pulls out a bottle of floor cleaner. Reads the label for the ingredients. Walks back to the food tray, where she unscrews the cap on the floor cleaner.

The mother pours the tiniest amount of the clear ammonia liquid into the child's soup. She replaces the cap and puts the bottle back in the closet.

The image of the mother turns to the bed carrying the tray. She places the food on a metallic rolling table and swings it over the bed.

MRS. COLLINS
(video tape)
Kara, time for lunch.

Kara pretends to wake from a deep sleep.

KARA
(video tape)
I'm feeling much better now.

The image of the mother smiles.

MOTHER
(video tape)
I'm glad honey.
(beat)
Time for your food.

KARA
(video tape)
Can I go outside, if I eat this?

MOTHER
(video tape)
We'll see. You know how
you get sick in the
afternoons.

Kara picks up the spoon and takes a sip. Her face crinkles at the taste. She looks up at her mother.

MOTHER
(video tape)
Don't say it tastes funny. You know I don't like to hear that.

Kara slowly brings the spoon to her mouth and swallows another spoonful.

The father SHUTS OFF THE TELEVISION with his trembling hands. He presses his hands to his eyes like they're burning.

The ROOM IS UTTERLY SILENT.

Mrs. Collins starts to move across the room towards her husband. People move away from her as she passes.

The father looks up. Their eyes meet. The whole world stops.

The mother's face begins to disintegrate under the glare of the father as he rises from his seat. Rage filling every cell of his body.

MR. COLLINS
You... I can't believe...
(beat)
You were making her sick?

Mr. Collins rushes forward in an explosion of anger.

MR. COLLINS
What have you done!

He gets restrained by family and friends around him. The anger disappears as he's held tightly in the arms of his loved ones. He collapses and begins to sob. Mr. Collins dissolves in his grief.

Mrs. Collins stands still in the middle of the room. She looks around at the horrified faces.

MRS. COLLINS
I took care of her...

Her words are met with ice cold stares. She begins to shake. Tears stream down her face. The pretty flowers of consolation in her hand tumble to the floor.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Cole sits on the swings next to Kara's four year old sister. She doesn't look up.

Malcolm waits in the driveway. Watches them from a distance.

Cole reaches into his pocket and pulls out the little FINGER PUPPET. He holds it out.

COLE
You liked it, she said.

The four year old stares at the finger puppet, then quietly takes it in her small hands.

The two children don't say anything for a while. Malcolm glances to the house, where all movement in and out of the home has ceased.

Cole turns to the four year old.

COLE
She watched out for you.

The little girl finally looks up. She has the saddest eyes.

FOUR YEAR OLD
Kara's not coming back.

Beat.

COLE
Not anymore.

The little girl stares down at the finger puppet. Cole lightly places a hand on her shoulder.

Nothing else is said. Nothing else is done.

Malcolm looks across at the two children on the swings. One mourning. One consoling.

Malcolm takes it in, overwhelmed.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BACKSTAGE - AFTERNOON

THE DULL SOUND OF RAIN OUTSIDE FILLS THE BACKSTAGE AREA as Stanley Cunningham, moves between two curtains and comes to a dressing room door in the back. He puts an ear to the door, listens and then knocks. After a second, he enters.

Mr. Cunningham finds Cole sitting in a poor villager costume talking to an old nun. Cole and the nun turn and look at Mr. Cunningham.

MR. CUNNINGHAM
They're calling for the stable boy.

Mr. Cunningham looks around the room and then directly at Cole.

MR. CUNNINGHAM
Who were you talking to?

The sister looks to Cole and nods.

NUN
Poor Stanley.

She stands up. WE SEE SHE HAS NO LEGS.

NUN
Such a good student.

THE HEAD AND TORSO OF THE SISTER MOVES TO AN OPEN CLOSET AND WALKS INTO IT. SHE DISAPPEARS INTO THE DARKNESS.

Cole puts on his tattered hat.

COLE
Thank's for giving me this part Mr. Cunningham.

Mr. Cunningham smiles.

MR. CUNNINGHAM
You're welcome Cole.

They share a look before walking out of the dressing room and entering the hall.

We see them walking away.

MR. CUNNINGHAM
You know when I was in school, the roof collapsed in this section of the theater. Some teachers got hurt. They rebuilt the whole thing.

Beat.

COLE
I know.

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

Malcolm runs through the rain with his jacket pulled over his head. He scurries up the stairs of the school.

CUT TO:

INT. HALL - AFTERNOON

Malcolm stands and catches his breath in the corridor of St. Christopher's Academy.

A teacher rushes in the hall with an armload of costumes.

MALCOLM
Has the play started yet?

The teacher hurries past Malcolm and down the hall without saying a word.

MALCOLM
Is that a yes?

The teacher scurries around a corner. Malcolm watches her curiously.

CUT TO:

INT. GYMNASIUM - AFTERNOON

Malcolm moves quickly to a set of double doors and opens them. He steps into the DARKNESS OF THE GYMNASIUM.

The play is full swing...Cole and a large group of costumed children are on stage. Cole holds a broom and wears a worn down costume. He stands to the side - hidden by others.

A boy in a shiny armored costume walks to the center of the stage where a large cardboard stone is seated. A sparkling HANDLE sticks out of the top.

The armored boy tries to lift it. It won't budge.

MERLIN, a boy in a magician's costume steps forward.

MERLIN
Only he who is pure of heart
can take the sword from the
stone.

Merlin looks to the group on stage. Looks right at Cole.

MERLIN
Let the boy try.

The group of villagers on the stage LAUGH AND MOCK THE SUGGESTION.

Tommy Tammisimo is dressed in a mismatched costume - he hops around, clearly embarrassed.

TOMMY
(half-heartedly)
But he's the stable boy. He
cleans after the horses.

MERLIN
Silence village idiot! Let the
boy step forward.

Tommy turns a deep shade of red and hobbles off the stage.

Merlin looks to Cole.

MERLIN
Arthur...

Cole hesitates. Not because he's acting. He really hesitates. It takes him a moment, before he steps forward.

Cole steps up to the stone. He places his hand around the handle. Begins to pull. The sword starts to come out.

The villagers GASP.

Cole raises the shiny sword out of the stone and high above his head.

Merlin and everyone on stage bows. A SILENCE FILLS THE GYM.

Malcolm watches his client, standing in the spot light for the first time.

CUT TO:

EXT. DRIVEWAY - LATE AFTERNOON

The rain comes down a little stronger now. A group of children wait under an awning as parents in cars arrive to pick them up.

TEACHER
Buchanan, Terry Buchanan.

Students run out from the awning as their names are called.

Cole waits to one side with Malcolm. They stare out at the rain in silence.

COLE
How come were so quiet?

Malcolm shrugs his shoulders.

MALCOLM
I think we said everything we needed to say.
(beat)
Maybe it's time to say things to someone else? Someone close to you?

COLE
Maybe.

They stand quietly again. Beat.

COLE
I'm not going to see you anymore am I?

Malcolm doesn't respond for a while. He shakes his head, "No." Beat.

MALCOLM
You were great in the play Cole.

COLE
Really?

MALCOLM
And you know what else?

COLE
What?

MALCOLM
Tommy Tammisimo sucked big time.

Cole smiles huge. Beat. They stand in silence for a while.

COLE
...Maybe we can pretend we're going to see each other tomorrow?

The two just stand there looking at each other.

COLE
Just for pretend.

Beat Malcolm exhales very slowly as he moves out from under the awning.

MALCOLM
Okay Cole, I'm going to go now... I'll see you tomorrow.

Cole watches as Malcolm steps out into the rain. Cole's eyes fill suddenly with tears.

COLE
(soft)
See you tomorrow.

Malcolm slowly turns and walks down the school's driveway. Cole takes a couple steps out from the awning as he watches.

Rain trickles down on Cole's face as he looks out.

Malcolm is barely visibly as he walks down the sidewalk. Rain pouring over him. Malcolm dissolves into the sheets of driving rain.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAR. - LATE AFTERNOON

Rain comes down like gunfire from the sky. A two lane road merges to one lane around a severe car accident. Police flares guide the cars as they crawl by.

Lynn and Cole are standing still in bumper to bumper traffic. The windshield wipers are losing the battle against the rain.

Lynn leans her chin on the steering wheel. She tries to stare through the layer of water on the glass.

LYNN
I hope nobody got hurt.

Beat. Lynn glances over to Cole who sits in his seat silently.

LYNN
You're very quiet.
(beat)
You're mad I missed the play aren't you?

Cole shakes his head, "No."

LYNN
I have two jobs baby. You know how important they are for us.

Beat.

LYNN
I'd give anything to have been there.

COLE
I'm ready to communicate with you now.

Beat.

LYNN
Communicate?

COLE
Tell you my secrets.

The way he says the words, gives Lynn a chill.

LYNN
What is it?

Cole takes a long time.

COLE
You know that accident up there?

LYNN
(confused)
Yeah.

COLE
Someone got hurt.

LYNN
They did?

COLE
A lady. She died.

LYNN
Oh my God.

Lynn leans over the steering wheel. She wipes the windshield with her palm to see better.

LYNN
You can see her?

COLE
Yes.

Lynn gazes out the windshield at the line of red tail lights. Beat.

LYNN
Where is she?

COLE
Standing next to my window.

A WOMAN IN HER LATE FORTIES. HAIR MATTED WITH RAIN AND BLOOD, STANDS STARING THROUGH COLE'S PASSENGER WINDOW.

Lynn looks over slowly. She doesn't see anything outside his window. She eyes Cole.

LYNN
Cole, you're scaring me.

COLE
They scare me too sometimes.

LYNN
They?

COLE
Dead people.

LYNN
Dead people?

COLE
Ghosts.

Beat.

LYNN
You see ghosts Cole?

COLE
They want me to do things for them.

LYNN
They talk to you?

Cole nods. "Yes."

LYNN
They tell you to do things?

Cole nods "Yes" again. Lynn becomes upset. She nods with grave understanding. Cole watches her.

COLE
You believe me?

LYNN
(lying)
Yes.

Beat.

LYNN
Just let me think for a second.

COLE
I didn't think you'd believe me.

Lynn doesn't respond. She drowns in her thoughts. Beat.

COLE
Grandma says hi.

Lynn looks up sharply.

COLE
She says she's sorry for taking the bumble bee pendant. She just likes it a lot.

LYNN
What?

COLE
Grandma comes to visit me sometimes.

Lynn becomes still. Her face is unreadable. When she speaks, her words are extremely controlled.

LYNN
Cole that's very wrong. Grandma's gone. You know that.

COLE
I know.

Beat.

COLE
She wanted me to tell you-

LYNN
(soft)
Cole please stop.

COLE
She wanted me to tell you, she saw you dance.

Lynn's eyes lock on Cole.

COLE
She said when you were little, you and her had a fight right before your dance recital. You thought she didn't come to see you dance. She did.

Lynn brings her hands to her mouth.

COLE
She hid in the back so you wouldn't see... She said you were like an angel.

Lynn begins to cry.

COLE
She said, you came to her where they buried her. Asked her a question... She said the answer is "Everyday."

Lynn covers her face with her hands. The tears roll out through her fingers.

COLE
(whispers)
What did you ask?

Beat. Lynn looks at her son. She barely gets the words out.

LYNN
(crying)
Do I make her proud?

Cole moves closer to Lynn. She cradles him in her arms. Mother and son hold each other tight.

The rain pelts the windshield of the car as the THIN SOUND OF AMBULANCE SIRENS GROWS IN THE DISTANCE.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Malcolm enters the living room and smiles at what he sees.

Anna is asleep in a chair. She's curled up in a ball. In a way, she looks like a little girl.

Their WEDDING VIDEO PLAYS SOFTLY ON THE TELEVISION.

Malcolm watches himself and Anna cutting their wedding cake. THE CROWD APPLAUDS AS THEY FEED EACH OTHER PIECES.

Malcolm turns from the television and takes a seat next to Anna. He gazes upon his wife softly.

MALCOLM
(whispers)
Anna, I've been so lost.
(beat)
I need my best friend.

Silence. Malcolm gazes for a beat before looking down.

ANNA
I miss you.

Malcolm's eyes move back up. He looks at his sleeping wife. ANNA'S TALKING IN HER SLEEP.

Malcolm can't believe it.

MALCOLM
I miss you.

Beat. Her lips move again. Eyes never open.

ANNA
Why Malcolm?

MALCOLM
What Anna? What did I do?
What's made you so sad?

Beat.

ANNA
Why did you leave me?

MALCOLM
I didn't leave you.

Beat. She becomes silent. Anna falls back into deep sleep, her arm slides down. SOMETHING SHINY FALLS OUT AND ROLLS ON THE GROUND.

Malcolm's eyes watch as it comes to a stop... Beat. He gazes curiously at a GOLD WEDDING BAND laying on the wood floor.

Confusion washes over his face. He looks to Anna's hand... An identical gold wedding ring sits on her finger.

Beat. Malcolm looks down at his own hand... HIS WEDDING RING IS GONE.

Malcolm is completely lost. He takes a couple steps back. Looks around in confusion...

His eyes come to rest on the door to his basement office. He looks in disbelief at the set of DEAD BOLT LOCKS on the door.

Malcolm doesn't know what the hell's going on... His eyes are drawn to the dining table... Only ONE PLACE SETTING is out on the tabletop.

His eyes search again - they finally lock on the WEDDING VIDEO PLAYING. Malcolm watches images of himself on the screen... His eyes fill with a storm of emotions...

Malcolm looks to Anna's face and becomes very still. Beat.

CLOSE ON ANNA...TILL HER SLEEPING FACE FILLS THE FRAME... IT'S NOW WE NOTICE FOR THE FIRST TIME, THAT ANNA'S BREATHS ARE FORMING TINY CLOUDS IN THE COLD AIR.

MALCOLM
(like he's falling down a deep hole)
No...

SLAM CUT:

FLASHBACK: INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

VIOLENT GUN SHOTS RING THROUGH THE BEDROOM.

Vincent Gray flops back onto the bed. He makes a GURGLING SOUND as his eyes look up.

Anna rushes across the room to a crumpled Malcolm laying on the floor. Malcolm's hands are clutched at his side.

Anna pries his hands away to reveal an enormous hole under his ribs. The blood pours out uncontrollably.

Malcolm's jaw is locked open. His breaths are long and strained.

ANNA IS SCREAMING, BUT HER VOICE SOUNDS FAR AWAY.

Malcolm's open jaw releases a long strained breath and then becomes silent. Anna tries to cover the wound with her hands desperately.

We move to Vincent Gray on the bed. His eyes twitch with the last glimmers of life. They stare upward. We follow his stare to the person standing next to the bed.

MALCOLM'S GHOST watches as the young man stares right at him. The young man's eyes finally close. MALCOLM'S GHOST looks around the room in a daze.

SLAM CUT:

PRESENT: INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

MALCOLM
(screaming)
ANNA!

MALCOLM'S VOICE SHAKES THE ROOM.

Anna just sleeps.

Malcolm staggers back. His breathing erratic.

He takes a seat across from her. He looks at his wife and suddenly becomes very still.

Anna's still curled up asleep, but tears are falling from her shut eyes.

Beat.

MALCOLM
Don't cry.

Anna doesn't move, but her tears seem to fall a little faster.

MALCOLM
I think I have to go.

Malcolm's mind is racing.

MALCOLM
(whispers)
I just needed to help someone first.

ANNA
...Did you help?

MALCOLM
...I think so.

ANNA
(smiling)
...You're a miracle.

Malcolm gazes at his wife. Tears fill his eyes.

MALCOLM
You sleep now Anna.
Everything will be different
in the morning.

Anna lays still.

ANNA
Goodnight Malcolm.

MALCOLM
Goodnight sweetheart.

The room falls into silence. Malcolm sits still across from his wife. He drinks her in with his eyes.

Malcolm leans back in the chair. Slowly closes his eyes. They close shut.

WE ARE TIGHT ON ANNA... WE SEE HER SOFT BREATHS FORMING A TINY CLOUD IN THE COLD AIR...

WITH EACH BREATH, THEY BECOME LESS AND LESS VISIBLE... THE ROOM BECOMING LESS AND LESS COLD.

SOON HER BREATHS AREN'T VISIBLE AT ALL. SHE BREATHS GENTLY FALLING BACK INTO A PEACEFUL SLEEP.

WE PULL BACK to reveal Anna alone in the living room.

THE WEDDING VIDEO PLAYS IT'S LAST SCENES... MALCOLM IS AT THE MICROPHONE ON THE DANCE FLOOR IN FRONT OF ALL THE GUESTS. HE'S HOLDING A GLASS OF WINE.

MALCOLM
(on tape)
...I think I've had too much
to drink.

Malcolm smiles as he takes a sip. The guests chuckle as they watch. Beat.

MALCOLM
(on tape)
I just have to say, this day
today has been one very
special day.... I wish we all
could stay and play.

The crowd erupts in LAUGHTER.

MALCOLM
(on tape)
What?

Malcolm looks around at everyone's smiling faces.

Beat. Malcolm takes his time. He looks just past the camera.

MALCOLM
Anna, I never thought I'd feel
the things I'm feeling. I never
thought I'd be able to stand
up in front of my friends and
family and tell them what's
inside me... Today I can...

Malcolm's eyes fill with water.

MALCOLM
(softly)
Anna Crowe... I am in love.
In love I am.

FADE TO BLACK:

THE END

M.N.S.